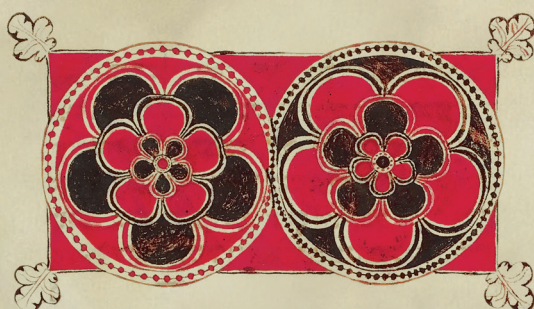
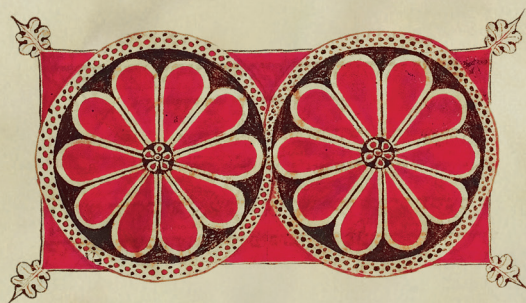




Urgency and Severity

PAULINE RATIONALE FOR EXPULSION
IN 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13



DAVID E. BOSWORTH

BRILL

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By

David E. Bosworth



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The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available online at <https://catalog.loc.gov>
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2024930432>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 0928-0731

ISBN 978-90-04-69311-1 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-69313-5 (e-book)

DOI 10.1163/9789004693135

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Contents

Acknowledgements ix

Abbreviations x

1 A Vexing Situation in Corinth 1

- 1 An Imbroglia 1
 - 1.1 *Paul's Urgency* 3
 - 1.2 *Paul's Severity* 4
 - 1.3 *A Self-Evident Conclusion?* 5
 - 1.4 *Prior Explanations* 6
 - 1.5 *Paul's Concern for Reputation* 11
- 2 Social Scientific Criticism: Heuristic Tool 13
 - 2.1 *Emergence of Socio-Historical Approach* 14
 - 2.2 *Development of Social Scientific Modelling* 16
 - 2.3 *Heuristic Value of a Social Identity Approach* 23
- 3 Psychological Models: Social Identity 26
 - 3.1 *Henri Tajfel's Renegotiation of Identity* 27
 - 3.2 *Further Developments in Social Identity Research* 31
 - 3.3 *Key Features of Social Identity in 1 Corinthians* 34
- 4 Sociological Models: Ethics, Honor and Ritual 42
 - 4.1 *Identity, Ethics and Ethos* 43
 - 4.2 *Honor, Shame and Shamelessness* 46
 - 4.3 *Ritual Theory* 48
- 5 Critical Suppositions 49
 - 5.1 *Authorship and Dating* 49
 - 5.2 *Argument of 1 Corinthians* 50
 - 5.3 *Textual Criticism* 56
 - 5.4 *Lexical Analysis* 58
- 6 Conclusion 62

2 The *Ecclesia* as Bounded Entity 63

- 1 Lexical Choices Indicating Group Boundedness 63
- 2 Group Boundedness in Corinth 64
 - 2.1 *Superordinate Identity* 67
 - 2.2 *Status Mobility and Group Permeability* 70
 - 2.3 *Vernacular Descriptions of Outsiders* 75
 - 2.4 *Conformance to Group Norms* 76
 - 2.5 *Social Comparisons* 79
 - 2.6 *Mimesis and Prototypicality* 79

3	Examples of Identity-Forming Constructs	82
3.1	<i>Baptism</i>	82
3.2	<i>Kinship Affinity</i>	89
4	Conclusion	94
3	Pauline Emphasis of Ethics and Ethos	95
1	Liminality in Corinth	95
1.1	<i>Gender</i>	98
1.2	<i>Status</i>	100
1.3	<i>Ethnicity</i>	103
2	Moral Ethos of Pagan Corinth	106
3	Ethical Distinction and Sensitivity to Outsiders	112
3.1	<i>Paraenetical Exhortation Brings Ingroup Definition</i>	114
3.2	<i>Norm Conformance as Means of Witness</i>	116
3.3	<i>Morality as Ethic, Purity as Ethos</i>	120
4	Conclusion	121
4	Roman Perceptions of Incest	122
1	Paul's Reason for Referencing Gentiles	123
2	Establishing a Roman View of Incest	124
2.1	<i>Diversity in Regard to Genre and Author</i>	126
2.2	<i>Unity in Regard to Negativity</i>	128
2.3	<i>Diversity in Regard to Audience</i>	130
3	Extant Evidence for a Roman View of Incest	131
3.1	<i>Cicero (106–43 BC): Pro Caelio and Pro Cluentio</i>	131
3.2	<i>Catullus (c.84 BC–c.54 BC): Catulli Carmina</i>	135
3.3	<i>Virgil (70 BC–19 BC): Aeneid</i>	139
3.4	<i>Strabo (64/63 BC–c. AD 24): Geographica</i>	140
3.5	<i>Diodorus Siculus (c. 60 BC–c. 21 BC): Bibliotheca historica</i>	141
3.6	<i>Ovid (43 BC–AD 17/18): Metamorphoses</i>	143
3.7	<i>Philo (c. 20 BC–c. AD 50): De Specialibus Legibus</i>	147
3.8	<i>Seneca the Younger (c. 4 BC–AD 65): Phaedra</i>	149
3.9	<i>Lucan (AD 39–AD 65): Pharsalia</i>	151
3.10	<i>Martial (AD 38/41–AD 102/104): Epigrams</i>	153
3.11	<i>Plutarch (c. AD 46–c. AD 119): Bioi paralleloi and Moralia</i>	155
3.12	<i>Quintus Curtius (mid-first century AD): Historiae Alexandri Magni</i>	157
3.13	<i>Juvenal (c. AD 55–c. AD 138): Satires VI</i>	157
3.14	<i>Pliny the Younger (c. AD 61–c. AD 113): Epistulae</i>	159
3.15	<i>Excursus: Apuleius</i>	160

4	Other Sources	161
4.1	<i>Egyptian Census Records (every 14 years AD 5/6–AD 257/258)</i>	162
4.2	<i>Legal Sources</i>	163
4.3	<i>Political Invective and Incest</i>	170
5	Conclusion	176
5	Derogation as Means of Witness	179
1	Mediterranean Values of Honor and Shame	180
1.1	<i>Honor</i>	183
1.2	<i>Shame</i>	187
1.3	<i>Shamelessness</i>	188
1.4	<i>Dyadic Nature of Honor/Shame</i>	189
1.5	<i>Honor and Shame in the Corinthian Correspondence</i>	191
2	Honor, Shame and Derogation in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13	193
2.1	<i>Paul's Multifaceted Concern Regarding Shame</i>	194
2.2	<i>Paul's Concern Regarding Abrogated Witness</i>	196
2.3	<i>Potential Motives for the Immoral Man</i>	200
2.4	<i>Potential Motives for the Ecclesia</i>	207
2.5	<i>Explanation for Anomalous Incest</i>	211
2.6	<i>Identity Clarity through Derogation</i>	231
3	Conclusion	233
6	Eucharist and the Immoral Man	234
1	Commensality as a Social Phenomenon	234
1.1	<i>Festive Meals Forged Communal Relationships</i>	237
1.2	<i>Festive Meals Encouraged Articulation of Ideas</i>	238
1.3	<i>Festive Meals Included and Excluded by Invitation</i>	239
1.4	<i>Festive Meals Displayed Social Stratification</i>	240
1.5	<i>Festive Meals Invoked the Divine</i>	241
1.6	<i>Festive Meals Enabled Formal Affiliation</i>	242
2	Commensal Ritual and Social Identity	242
2.1	<i>Assembly: Eucharist as Cultivator of Belonging</i>	244
2.2	<i>Unity: Eucharist as Common Confession</i>	246
2.3	<i>Purity: Eucharist as Cleanser from Idolatry</i>	251
3	Sympotic Exclusion in 1 Corinthians 5:6–8	254
3.1	<i>Synoptic Tradition</i>	255
3.2	<i>Expiation and Purity</i>	257
3.3	<i>Immorality, Judgment and Dining</i>	259
3.4	<i>The Lord's Supper as Sympotic Meal</i>	262
4	Conclusion	266

7	Reputation as Criteria for Expulsion	268
1	The Argument, in Short	268
2	Benefits of This Study	270
2.1	<i>Roman Views of Incest</i>	271
2.2	<i>Eucharistic Imagery in 1 Corinthians 5:6–8</i>	271
2.3	<i>Ethically Justified Incest</i>	272
2.4	<i>Bounded Conception of Ecclesia</i>	272
2.5	<i>Social Scientific and Historical-Grammatical Criticism</i>	273
2.6	<i>Advancing Social Identity Analysis</i>	273
2.7	<i>Synergism between Anthropological and Psychological Approaches</i>	275
3	Conclusion	276
	Bibliography	277
	Index	310

Acknowledgements

Projects of this nature are never undertaken alone. I would like to thank the University of Pretoria for welcoming me as a research associate in the Department of New Testament and Related Literature and the faculty and staff of Evangelische Theologische Faculteit Leuven for aiding the project all along the way. God has given us the community of faith to motivate, encourage and work alongside (Heb. 10:23–25). I give thanks to the Lord for the many Christ-followers he has put in my path throughout the research and publishing of this resource. With gratitude to ... my Doktorväter, Prof. Dr Jacobus Kok and Dr H.H. Drake Williams III, whose kind and patient tutorage nudged me into deeper, more scholarly explorations of the New Testament. ... to Elsie Wilms, who provided humor and reassurance at critical moments. ... my students at Colorado Christian University who have consistently encouraged me by their own questions and eagerness to learn. ... Elise Hegarty who vigilantly indexed bibliographic information, Lucas Barnts who scanned the vast majority of source material for this project and Ethan Metz who spent hours reviewing Greek quotes throughout the manuscript. ... Gayle Gunderson, Oliver Schultz and the library faculty of Colorado Christian University who endured persistent interlibrary loan requests and who continued checking out books to me even while moving the entire collection to a new facility. ... Dr David Kotter who supported this project from inception by constantly strategizing synergistic points of collaboration with my teaching responsibilities. ... Fotis Romeos and Costas Tsevas who first took me to ancient Corinth in 2004 and kindled a passion to learn from the believers who once lived in that city. ... Jeff Baldwin who first introduced me to Evangelische Theologische Faculteit where this research was undertaken and who went to be with the Lord the very day the provisional draft was submitted. ... my parents, William and Sherry Bosworth, whose prioritization of excellent educational opportunities early in life made this pursuit possible. ... our children, Stephen and Clara, who affably allowed me to take along stacks of oddly titled books to ski lodges while they snowboarded the slopes of the Colorado Rockies. ... and, most importantly, with gratitude to my wife, Lorraine, who believed this project was possible long before I did, and whose example of always seeking to learn and apply new truths has propelled me along in more ways than I can express.

Abbreviations

Aen.	Virgil, <i>Aeneid</i>
App., Syr.	Appian, <i>Συρία</i>
Apul., <i>Apol.</i>	Apuleius, <i>Apologia</i>
Apul., <i>Met.</i>	Apuleius, <i>Metamorphoses</i>
Ar., <i>Frag.</i>	Aristophanes, <i>Fragments</i>
Arist., <i>Eth. Nic.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Ethica Nicomachea</i>
Arist., <i>Rh.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Rhetorica</i>
Ath.	Athenaeus, <i>Deipnosophistae</i>
Augustine, <i>Serm. Dom.</i>	Augustine, <i>De sermone Domini in monte</i>
Catull.	Catullus, <i>Carmina</i>
Chrys., <i>Hom. 1 Cor.</i>	John Chrysostom, <i>Homiliae in epistulam i ad Corinthios</i>
Cic., <i>Cael.</i>	Cicero (Marcus Tullius), <i>Pro Caelio</i>
Cic., <i>Chu.</i>	Cicero (Marcus Tullius), <i>Pro Cluentio</i>
Cic., <i>Leg.</i>	Cicero (Marcus Tullius), <i>De legibus</i>
Cic., <i>Tusc.</i>	Cicero (Marcus Tullius), <i>Tusculanae disputationes</i>
Clem. Al., <i>Strom.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Stromata</i>
<i>Cod. Theod.</i>	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>
Curt.	Q. Curtius Rufus, <i>Historiae Alexandri Magni</i>
<i>Dig.</i>	<i>Digesta seu Pandectae</i>
Dio Cass.	Dio Cassius, <i>Historia Romana</i>
Dio Chrys., <i>Or.</i>	Dio Chrysostomus, <i>Orationes</i>
Diod. Sic.	Diodorus Siculus, <i>Bibliotheca historica</i>
Diog. Laert.	Diogenes Laertius, <i>Vitae Philosophorum</i>
<i>Docs. Aen.</i>	Virgil, <i>Aeneid</i>
Gai., <i>Inst.</i>	Gaius, <i>Institutiones</i>
Gell., <i>NA</i>	Aulus Gellius, <i>Noctes Atticae</i>
Herod.	Herodas, <i>Mimiamboi</i>
Hom., <i>Il.</i>	Homer, <i>Iliad</i>
Isoc.	Isocrates, <i>Ad Demonium</i>
Joseph., <i>AJ.</i>	Josephus, <i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i>
Justin, <i>Apol.</i>	Justin Martyr, <i>Apologia</i>
Juv.	Juvenal, <i>Satires</i>
Livy, <i>Epit.</i>	Livy, <i>Epitomae</i>
Luc.	Lucan, <i>Pharsalia</i>
Mart., <i>Spect.</i>	Martial, <i>Spectacula</i>
Origen, <i>C. Cels.</i>	Origen, <i>Contra Celsum</i>
Ov., <i>Met.</i>	Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i>

Ov., <i>Tr.</i>	Ovid, <i>Tristia</i>
Paus.	Pausanias, <i>Hellados Periegesis</i>
<i>Pesah.</i>	<i>Mishnah Pesachim</i>
Philo, <i>Jos.</i>	Philo, <i>De Josepho</i>
Philo, <i>Leg.</i>	Philo, <i>Legatio ad Gaium</i>
Philo, <i>Spec.</i>	Philo, <i>De Specialibus Legibus</i>
Pind., <i>Ol.</i>	Pindar, <i>Olympian Odes</i>
Pind., <i>Frag.</i>	Pindar, <i>Fragments</i>
Pl., <i>Leg.</i>	Plato, <i>Leges</i>
Pl., <i>Resp.</i>	Plato, <i>Respublica</i>
Plin., <i>Ep.</i>	Pliny (the Younger), <i>Epistulae</i>
Plin., <i>HN.</i>	Pliny (the Elder), <i>Naturalis historia</i>
Plut., <i>Mor. Amat.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Moralia Amatorius</i>
Plut., <i>Mor. De aud.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Moralia De Auditu</i>
Plut., <i>Mor. De frat. amor.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Moralia De fraterno amore</i>
Plut., <i>Mor. Quaest. conv.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Moralia Quaestiones convivales</i>
Plut., <i>Mor. Quaest. Rom.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Moralia Quaestiones Romanae</i>
Plut., <i>Vit. Cim.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Vitae Parallelae Cimon</i>
Plut., <i>Vit. Demetr.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Vitae Parallelae Demetrius</i>
POxy.	<i>Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i>
RGDA	<i>Res Gestae Divi Augusti</i>
Sen., <i>Ep.</i>	Seneca (the Younger), <i>Epistulae</i>
Sen., <i>Phaed.</i>	Seneca (the Younger), <i>Phaedra</i>
Sen., <i>Ben</i>	Seneca (the Younger), <i>De beneficiis</i>
Sext. Emp., <i>Pyr.</i>	Sextus Empiricus, <i>Πυρρώνειοι ὑποτυώσεις</i>
Strab.	Strabo, <i>Geography</i>
Suet., <i>Calig.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Gaius Caligula</i>
Suet., <i>Claud.</i>	Suetonius, <i>Divus Claudius</i>
Tac., <i>Ann.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Annales</i>
Tatianus, <i>Ad Gr.</i>	Tatianus, <i>Oratio ad Graecos</i>
Tert., <i>Apol.</i>	Tertullian, <i>Apologeticus</i>
Tert., <i>De pud.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De Pudicitia</i>
Theoph., <i>Ad Autol.</i>	Theophilus, <i>Ad Autolycum</i>

A Vexing Situation in Corinth

1 An Imbroglio

While residing in Ephesus, Paul received an account of a man in the Corinthian *ecclesia* who was involved in a sexually intimate relationship with his stepmother. Such behavior was not acceptable by Jewish standards. The Law clearly prohibited all manner of incestuous relationships, including the wife of one's father (Lev. 18:6–18). Likewise, incest was unacceptable to gentile Romans, who expressed a strong incest taboo and had outlawed incestuous relationships of varying degrees.¹ For Paul, the difficulty was not merely the immoral and illegal behavior of the man himself but also the way in which the Corinthian congregation had endorsed the incestuous behavior of the man. The man was functioning as a member in good standing within the *ecclesia*,²

1 Arthur P. Wolf, *Incest Avoidance and the Incest Taboos: Two Aspects of Human Nature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 1; Jonathan H. Turner and Alexandra Maryanski, *Incest: Origins of the Taboo* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2015), 1–2. The term ‘incest taboo’ is utilized in biology and anthropology to describe avoidance of sexual relations with close kin and the disapproval of others’ sexual relations with close kin.

2 This book follows the convention of referring to the gathering of Christ-followers in Corinth with the transliteration of the term *ecclesia*, for the same reasons articulated by Dennis E. Smith: “The term ἐκκλησία is often translated ‘church’ in our literature, but that is a misleading translation for the letters of Paul, since it leads us to assume a social form which would be anachronistic for the time of Paul. In Paul’s day, ἐκκλησία was not yet a technical term. It was a generic term for a group meeting, and was used by Paul while he was in process of forming such groups. What distinguished the groups he founded from similar groups in the culture is that the Pauline groups were an ‘*ekklesia* of God [of Israel]’ (1 Cor. 1:2). This is in contrast with *ekklesiai* of Bacchus, or of Zeus, or of some other patron deity commonly honored in other group meetings, such as those of associations.” Dennis E. Smith, “Before There Was a Eucharist,” in *Eucharist and Ecclesiology: Essays in Honor of Dr. Everett Ferguson*, by Wendell Willis (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2017), 83–84. See also on this, J.B. Tucker, “1 Corinthians,” in *T&T Clark Social Identity Commentary on the New Testament*, ed. J.B. Tucker and Aaron Kuecker (London: T&T Clark, 2020), 295.

Likewise, the term Christ-followers will be utilized to describe members of the *ecclesia*, for it describes the essence of their allegiances without making a broader statement about the status of the movement as a whole. Jacobus Kok and Dieter T. Roth refute the notion that a monolithic expression of faith in Christ developed uniformly throughout the Roman context: “... this view of a radical ‘conversion’ presupposes that it is possible to speak of early Christ-followers as being ‘Christians’ and that they have ‘turned’ from one religion (for instance Judaism) to another religion, namely ‘Christianity’. It furthermore presupposes an

much to Paul's dismay. The entire situation was an imbroglio, a troublesome and undesirable circumstance filled with complication.

The apostle's reaction to the situation is characterized by both urgency and severity, but one must pause to consider why this particular situation evinced such a response. There were other very serious situations in Corinth which might also have justifiably caused a response of equal urgency and severity. Why was Paul's response to this specific circumstance escalated over and above other notable deviations within the Corinthian *ecclesia*? The answer is found in understanding the apostle's concern for unbelievers' perceptions of the *ecclesia*, particularly their beliefs about incest. Paul expressed deep concern for the clear demarcation of membership boundaries for the *ecclesia*. The acceptance of the incestuous man by the Corinthian Christ-followers permitted a person who did not fit the criteria for membership to remain in the group. This blurred the boundaries of demarcation for inclusion as a member of the *ecclesia*, which in turn diminished the ability of the *ecclesia* to offer witness to outsiders.

To demonstrate this supposition, a bounded conceptualization of the *ecclesia* as a distinct ingroup must first be established, both from 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 as well as the surrounding context of the correspondence. By instructing exclusion for the immoral man, Paul showed that it was possible to determine whether particular persons were members or non-members of the *ecclesia* by virtue of specific criteria. This book employs a social identity perspective as a framework for elucidating Paul's understanding of group boundedness in Corinth. This social scientific approach seeks to make explicit that which is implicitly embedded in the text by virtue of the social context in which the words were written and received. By entering into the social context of Roman pagans and Christ-followers, a social identity approach aids the exegete in determining how reputation influenced both insiders and outsiders.³ While

essentialized view of Christianity as a fixed 'religion' at that time. What this view fails to address adequately is the fact that Christianity as a religion developed slowly and over time and that the boundaries between insiders and outsiders were not fixed, but rather changed in different contexts." Jacobus Kok and Dieter T. Roth, "Sensitivity toward Outsiders and the Dynamic Relationship between Mission and Ethics/Ethos," in *Sensitivity towards Outsiders: Exploring the Dynamic Relationship between Mission and Ethics in the New Testament and Early Christianity*, ed. Jacobus Kok et al., *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe* 364 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 2–3.

- 3 It should be acknowledged that the social scientific lens is but one which might be utilized to approach 1 Corinthians 5:1–13. Care has been taken to assure that exegetical decisions are made according to traditional historical-grammatical critical methodology, with social scientific criticism serving as an additional aid to the exegetical process. In particular, an attempt has been to make sense of the words of the text in view of how they would have

a great deal of social scientific research has been done in the field of biblical studies, the matter of social identity has been sparingly applied to the situation of the immoral man. This book will give particular attention to the intersection of social identity studies with other influential sociological phenomenon such as honor/shame and ritual.

1.1 *Paul's Urgency*

Paul believed that the situation in Corinth needed to be addressed expediently. Several aspects of the text indicate this urgency. Paul moves right into this topic even before addressing the specific concerns about which the Corinthians had written to him (1 Cor. 7:1). His commentary on the matter begins abruptly without any form of transition or conjunction.⁴ He expresses forceful rhetorical questions, for example, when he asks οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι (do you not know?, 1 Cor. 5:6). He uses remarks which express surprise and dismay, such as the phrase τοιαύτη πορνεία (immorality of such a kind, 1 Cor. 5:10).⁵ Paul states that he has already judged the man upon hearing of the situation (1 Cor. 5:3). He instructs the *ecclesia* to pronounce his judgment when they assemble (1 Cor. 5:4). Since such a gathering occurred at least on a weekly basis, the reading of the letter to the Corinthian congregation was likely within days of being received.

Paul discusses many serious topics in his correspondence to the Corinthians. Nevertheless, despite the serious nature of these other situations, Paul suggests that those circumstances could be dealt with when he visits. For instance, even though believers are dying as a result of the inappropriate celebration of the Eucharist (1 Cor. 11:30), Paul offers some instructions but concludes by saying, Τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ ὡς ἂν ἔλθω διατάξομαι (The remaining matters I will arrange when I come, 1 Cor. 11:34). Similarly, Paul expresses deep concern for the efficacy of the gospel message (1 Cor. 15:1–11) in light of the argument by some that Christ

been understood in their original context. The analysis provided here should be considered in tandem with other approaches such that a fuller picture of the biblical text emerges.

- 4 Margaret M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 111–12; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 36–40; Dieter Zeller, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament 5 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 199; Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2nd ed., Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 7,1 (Zürich: Benziger, 2008), 368. This abruptness evidences an urgent introduction of the matter, rather than evidence for partition theories of 1 Corinthians.
- 5 Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 198.

had not been resurrected from the dead (1 Cor. 15:12). The result of affirming such ideas about the resurrection is drastic: κενὸν ἄρα τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν (our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain, 1 Cor. 15:14b) and ματαία ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, ἔτι ἐστὲ ἐν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν (your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins, 1 Cor. 15:17b). While Paul's exhortation displays great authority in its denial of this falsehood, the apostle nevertheless refrains from expulsatory instruction concerning the false teachers.⁶ He seems content to discuss the matter further when he arrives in Corinth, immediately making a transition from the topic of the resurrection to the matter of the collection (1 Cor. 16:1–9). By using the phrase ὅταν δὲ παραγένωμαι (when I arrive, 1 Cor. 16:3), he makes clear that these other matters can be more thoroughly resolved upon his arrival.

One is left to wonder why neither physical death by virtue of incorrect praxis in the *ecclesia* nor spiritual death by virtue of incorrect doctrinal belief would be addressed with the same urgency which Paul demonstrates in the case of the immoral man. While few would argue that incest should be categorized as a minor infraction or that it somehow lacks moral turpitude, the fact that Paul catapults this particular violation of norms to prominence is noteworthy. His urgency indicates that he was responding to factors implicit within the contextual milieu.

1.2 *Paul's Severity*

Apart from exhibiting urgency, Paul is quite severe in his response as well. As noted above, Paul's letter to the Corinthians surfaces many issues on which he imparts guidance. He exhibits a wide range of approaches in how he handles the various matters addressed. He deals with schisms and disunity by exhorting the Corinthians to reconceptualize their understanding of leadership as a pastoral endeavor (1 Cor. 1:12–13).⁷ Regarding the matter of brother taking a brother to court, he calls the deviants back to truth through shaming (1 Cor. 6:5). Paul condemns sexual contact with a prostitute (1 Cor. 6:15–20) by encouraging believers who are tempted to flee opportunity for sin (1 Cor. 6:18). Paul weighs in on questions regarding marriage, offering an admixture of fatherly advice,

⁶ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 381.

⁷ Paul accomplishes this by illustrating the shepherding process with an agricultural analogy. Paul planted the seed of the gospel, Apollos watered it and God brought about the growth (1 Cor. 3:5–9). Valuing the differences in leadership responsibility would enable the Corinthian Christ-followers to mitigate factionalism by appreciating diverse contributions to a unified cause.

preference and divine directive (1 Cor. 7:8–9, 10–16, 36).⁸ Regarding the conundrum of table fellowship, Paul offers himself as an exemplar, applying divine principles of purity and deference (1 Cor. 9:1–4, 19–23). In the matter of prophecies and tongues used within the public gatherings of the *ecclesia* (1 Cor. 12, 14), he puts forth a practical set of instructions for meeting in an orderly fashion. Paul deals with incorrect understandings of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15) by calling members of the *ecclesia* to revise their understanding and thus any doctrinal inaccuracies. In short, Paul has a diverse set of tools by which to encourage obedience and spiritual growth.

Paul's response to the situation of the immoral man does not exhibit the measured admonition or patient encouragement which he provides in the other situations found throughout the letter. Paul insists that the man should be removed from the *ecclesia* (1 Cor. 5:2) and delivered to Satan (1 Cor. 5:5)! While it may be some consolation that the man's spirit will be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5), this hardly takes the edge off the punishment. Whether deliverance to Satan involves removal of protection from the evil one or is indicative of physical death, the consequence is intended to be austere enough to communicate the sobriety of the situation. As with the matter of urgency, the severity of Paul's response indicates that the incestuous relationship was an existential threat to the *ecclesia*, even though this is not communicated explicitly in the text and was not perceived by the Christ-followers in Corinth.

1.3 *A Self-Evident Conclusion?*

One approach to this question of Paul's urgency and severity has been to suggest that the answer is self-evident. The moral turpitude of incest is recognized universally in human history, so the argument goes. Surely an action as reprehensible as unapologetic sexual engagement with one's stepmother is inherently worthy of the strongest condemnation possible.⁹ Such an approach, however, evades the question with broad strokes and generalizations, for the so-called universal incest taboo is rather difficult to establish historically. Admittedly, a proclivity against close-kin marriage is common, but the precise degree of

8 For those who are unmarried yet burning with passion, Paul concedes that marriage would be the most prudent course of action, though restraint is preferable (1 Cor. 7:8–9). For those tempted to leave an unbeliever through divorce, Paul advises the opposite (1 Cor. 7:10–16). And for fathers considering what to do with their unmarried daughters, again the Pauline directive relates to restraint and prudence (1 Cor. 7:36).

9 "Paul's severe and immediate reaction could be explained by the particularly gross character of the offense." Adela Y. Collins, "The Function of 'Excommunication' in Paul," *The Harvard Theological Review* 73, 1/2 (1980): 252.

relationship which is forbidden alters from society to society. There are also notable exceptions to the incest taboo in both ancient and modern contexts. Any declaration of the universality of incest prohibition must be accompanied by a long list of clarifications and addendums, which dilutes the argument that Paul's response is self-evident based on the incest itself.

Even if the urgency and severity were deemed self-explanatory in light of universal agreement regarding the depravity of incest, yet another nagging question remains. Where is the line to be drawn in regard to applying urgency and severity to non-incestuous circumstances? Or stated differently, what behavior qualifies as a breach of norms worthy of immediate expulsion from a community of Christ-followers? Without a clear understanding of the motivation and logic for Paul's particular intervention in the situation of the immoral man, an answer to these questions remains elusive. The exegete is simply left to acknowledge that something horrific happened in Corinth and that Paul responded with appropriate, even if indignant, disciplinary action. But little more can be discerned from the passage in terms of its applicability beyond this specific occasion. It remains unclear whether Paul was offering a model for how the *ecclesia* ought to conduct itself or whether the apostle was merely responding to a specific situation as he perceived best. Only through understanding the motivation for Paul's urgency and severity can the implications of his exhortation be fully apprehended beyond the immediate circumstances in Corinth.

1.4 *Prior Explanations*

Some have argued that the details offered in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 are too sparse to discern much beyond what is plainly stated. As James D.G. Dunn notes, “the situation envisaged in 1 Corinthians 5–6 remains tantalizingly obscure.”¹⁰ It is valuable here to differentiate the obscurity of personalities and circumstance from the capability of diagnosing potential motives for Paul's response. Because Paul authored the letter, much more can be known about his thoughts on the matter than can be known regarding the immoral man himself and the circumstances of his relationship. Those who have undertaken an analysis of Pauline motive have offered several rationales for the apostle's urgency and severity. This history of scholarship on the matter might be categorized into five general groupings, although four of the five come short of providing an adequate explanation.

The first explanation expresses the principle of reciprocity: serious sin merits strong consequences. Colloquially spoken, the punishment fits the crime.

10 James D.G. Dunn, *1 Corinthians*, T&T Clark Study Guides (London, New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 50.

The earliest, and perhaps most striking, communication of this position comes from Tertullian, who suggested that no mercy should be accorded to the incestuous man due to the seriousness of the sin.¹¹ Modern commentators, such as Gordon D. Fee, have echoed Tertullian's argument regarding the serious nature of incest:

[O]ut of his Jewish heritage he [Paul] is expressing what should be the normal consequences of being the people of God, who are called to be his holy people (1:2). It is this lack of a sense of sin, and therefore of any ethical consequences to their life in the Spirit, that marks the Corinthian brand of spirituality as radically different from that which flows out of the gospel of Christ crucified. And it is precisely this failure to recognize the depth of their corporate sinfulness due to their arrogance that causes Paul to take such strong action as is described in the next sentence (vv. 3–5).¹²

11 Tert., *De pud.* 14–15, 19. Cf. Bruce A. McDonald, “Spirit, Penance, and Perfection: The Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 5:3–5 from A.D. 200–451” (PhD, The University of Edinburgh, 1993), 6–29; David R. Smith, *Hand This Man over to Satan: Curse, Exclusion, and Salvation in 1 Corinthians 5*, Library of New Testament Studies 386 (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 6–11.

12 Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 203. Other examples of this view can also be located as follows. “Furthermore, Paul’s mention of the Passover is also reminiscent of the cleansing of the temple upon the festival as a tradition attested by 2 Chr 29:17 and Ezek 45:19. His ‘handover’ imperative echoes the cursing formula in the Greco-Roman world when one commits a serious sin against his gods. The ‘handover’ formula functions as a means of removing the profane source and restoring the temple’s purity. Also, the order of prohibition of eating with the immoral Christians could be reminiscent of the Pharisaic attitude toward the holiness of their table fellowship, which is an emulation of eating in God’s temple. The Qumran community held the same stern view by allowing neither the morally impure nor the ritually impure to approach the table. Therefore, the Corinthian Christians should have been able to understand the severity of the consequences if the temple purity was violated.” Yulin Liu, *Temple Purity in 1–2 Corinthians*, 343 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 237. “[T]he crime of incest, joined with adultery, was not prescribed after the lapse of five years. In other words, the punishment for incest and adultery was so severe that it could be punished at any time. The situation in Corinth, therefore, was one that involved sexual immorality of a criminal nature and went beyond just a moral concern to a legal concern. We find similar censure in the Jewish community. In the OT, we repeatedly see the condemning of a sexual relationship with a stepmother. The punishment for such an act being death. According to the Talmud, there are four modes of capital punishment: stoning, burning, decapitation, and strangulation. The most severe of these was stoning. Furthermore, there were eighteen crimes that were punished by stoning, the first four all concerning incest, particularly with a stepmother.” Adam G. White, *Paul, Community, and Discipline: Establishing Boundaries and Dealing with the Disorderly* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2021), 148. “Die Gemeinde soll grobe Sünder, die gegen die Heiligkeit der Gemeinde

In this view, Paul acted with severity because the transgression in view was itself a severe violation of divine standards. This explanation gives some insight into the matter of severity, though it does not always qualify why incest evoked severity when other consequential sins did not. Also, this position has nothing to say of Paul's urgency. Arguably, the irreversibility of punishment for serious transgressions (e.g., capital punishment) might warrant slower adjudication to assure justness in the outcome.

A second explanation suggests that the Hebrew scriptures provided a model for Paul's response to incestuous sin. The Israelites were being allowed into the land because it needed cleansing from abominations such as incest (Lev. 18:6, 24–25). The nation is exhorted to avoid such sins, but the consequence of failing to do so is that the Israelites would be spewed out of the land (Lev. 18:28) and cut off (Lev. 18:29). In this explanation of motive, Paul is applying these principles of exclusion to the sin of incest in particular. The severity of Paul's response to the sin of incest is linked with an expulsatory consequence laid out for the Israelites. Paul's response to the situation was likely shaped by his understanding of the Hebrew scriptures on the matter of exclusion. Leviticus 20:11–12, 14 indicates death as the punishment for incest with mother/stepmother, daughter-in-law and mother-in-law respectively. Comparatively, Leviticus 18:7–8 indicates that the nakedness of neither the mother or stepmother should be uncovered. The result would be expulsion, emulating the way in which Israel spewed out the immorality of the Canaanites from the land as they occupied it (Lev. 18:24–30). Roman jurisprudence allowed expulsion as an alternative to capital punishment, so the use of expulsion by Paul may be an acknowledgement of the capital nature of this offence under the Law.¹³ Augustine suggested that Paul had the corporal punishments of the Old Testament in mind when giving this exhortation, and modern commentators have echoed this sentiment.¹⁴ As with the previous explanation, the matter

verstoßen, aus ihrer Mitte ausschließen, wenn sich diese nicht zur Umkehr bewegen lassen. In Fällen leichter Fehltritte ermahnt der Apostel zu seelsorgerlicher Bemühung um die betroffenen Gemeindeglieder, um ihnen im Geist der Sanftmut zurechtzuhelfen (Gal 6, 1f.)." [The congregation should exclude from its midst gross sinners who violate the holiness of the congregation if they cannot be persuaded to repent. In cases of minor transgressions, the apostle exhorts pastoral care to help the affected church members in a spirit of gentleness (Gal. 6:1).] Friedrich Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther*, Das Neue Testament Deutsch Neues Göttinger Bibelwerk 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 76.

13 Craig S. Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 50; Zeller, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 201.

14 Augustine, *Serm. Dom.* 20.65. Modern commentators have also made the connection between the Hebrew model and the Pauline approach: "Paul's response to the report of

of severity is partially dealt with, but the urgency is unexplained. The Hebrew scriptures record many occasions where an expulsatory consequence is not immediately mediated by the Lord. The expulsion of Israel itself from the land is an example of the gradual perpetuation of transgression which resulted in eventual removal.

A third explanation expresses uneasiness regarding how the sinful behavior of the immoral man might tempt others to transgress similarly. Toleration for sin within the community could lead to rationalization on the part of others. Chrysostom suggests that the others might be tempted to the same faults.¹⁵ Modern scholars, such as Simon Kistemaker, have likewise expressed concern for the infectious nature of sin in the *ecclesia*: "If Paul had not acted forcefully to exclude this man from the church, the man's sin would have continued to infect the entire congregation. Indeed, the man's immoral conduct posed a direct threat to the existence of the church itself."¹⁶ The merit of this view is

incest is to insist that the man be excluded from the congregation. That Paul's instructions have links with his scriptural inheritance is clear from the use of Passover/unleavened bread imagery in vv. 7–8 and from the quotation of the Deuteronomic expulsion formula in v. 13b. As it turns out, these are just the 'tip of the iceberg' of scriptural dependence. A study of biblical and Jewish teaching on exclusion reveals many points of contact with Paul's thinking in this chapter." Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 197. "Paul seems to have translated the basic disciplinary norms of Israel's covenant community over onto the church at Corinth." Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 88. "It appears that the contents of this Pauline vice catalogue can thus be explained in terms of the *prima facie* purpose of 5:11, namely, to list those persons warranting exclusion from the Christian community according to the legislation of Deuteronomy. This also suggests that 5:13b is a deliberate Deuteronomic citation." Brian S. Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics: A Study of 1 Corinthians 5–7*, *Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums* 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 70. "The metaphor of the Passover serves to make the removal of the immoral man an urgent act, and to reinforce that imperative." Seth Kissi, *Wisdom, Knowledge, and Spirituality in Self-Defense: A Rhetorical Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1–6* (La Vergne: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019), 128.

15 Chrys., *Hom. 1 Cor.* 15.4.

16 Simon Kistemaker, "Deliver This Man to Satan" (1 Cor. 5:5): Case Study in Church Discipline," *The Masters Seminary Journal* 3, no. 1 (1992): 46–47. Other examples of this view can also be located as follows. "The motivation of the remedy that Paul is applying to this situation in the Corinthian community is ... expressed in another metaphor, this time drawn from the breaking of bread and the annual celebration of Passover. In the making of bread, a bit of leaven ferments the whole batch of dough. Immorality and other evil conduct have contaminated the community like 'old leaven,' because they have produced their evil effects in its corporate life." Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 32 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 230. "Paul believes that Christians who expose themselves to unnecessary evil run the risk of infection and the same end as the ancient Israelites, whose story serves

located in the analogy which Paul gives regarding the invasive power of leaven on a loaf (1 Cor. 5:6–8). Paul's concern was as much with the congregation's endorsement of incest as it was with the man's behavior—a fact which does have to be considered carefully, for the broader impact of the man's choices is certainly in Paul's mind. That said, the likelihood of temptation in relation to the specific sin of incest was minimal. It seems implausible that a rash of incestuous marriages to stepmothers was about to grip the Corinthian congregation, absent Paul's decisive and quick intervention. Moreover, other sins still possessed the ability to metastasize. Indiscrete gossip, for example, or insubordination to leadership could readily bring about gangrenous divisions within the *ecclesia*. Concern for temptation does not distinguish the particular sin of incest from other (more likely) sins.

A fourth view suggests that Paul hoped to disincentivize others from choosing destructive patterns of behavior by showing the severe consequences which result when a believer sins significantly. Chrysostom suggests that Paul intended to frighten the Corinthians into action.¹⁷ This approach is also noted in contemporary sources, such as Gerald Harris:

as a warning to us (10:8, 11–12).” Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 19. “Deshalb sucht sie Paulus mit einem als bekannt angenommenen (zu ‘wisst ihr nicht’ vgl. 3:16) Sprichwort (vgl. Gal 5,9; Mt 13,33 par.) von der veheerenden Wirkung des Vorgangs auf die Gemeinde zu überzeugen. Der Sauerteig illustriert zunächst nur die durchdringende Kraft einer kleinen Menge.” [Therefore, Paul tries to convince them of the devastating effect on the congregation with a known proverb (‘do you not know’ cf. 3:16) (cf. Gal. 5:9; Matt. 13:33). The leaven illustrates at first only the penetrating power of a small amount.] Zeller, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 204. “Es muß ein scharfer Trennungsstrich gezogen werden, damit die verletzte Heiligkeit der Gemeinde wiederhergestellt wird, und es muß bald gehandelt werden, damit die schwere Sünde nicht weiter um sich greift.” [A sharp line must be drawn to restore the damaged holiness of the church, and action must be taken soon so that grave sin does not continue to spread.] Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther*, 72. “Wenn die korinthischen Christen das unmoralische Verhalten des inzestuösen Gemeindeglieds tolerieren, dann verhelfen sie der alten Lebensweise (des ‘Fleisches’) zu fortgesetzter Existenz und dulden—und praktizieren—früher oder später jede Sünde, so dass die ganze Gemeinde infiziert wird.” [When the Corinthian Christians tolerate the immoral behavior of the incestuous church member, they are helping the old way of life (the ‘flesh’) to continue to exist and sooner or later condone—and practice—every sin so that the whole church becomes infected.] Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, Historisch Theologische Auslegung, Neues Testament (Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 2006), 286. Cf. David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 153–54; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 404–8; Tobias Hägerland, “Rituals of (Ex-) Communication and Identity: 1 Cor 5 and 4Q266 11; 4Q270 7,” in *Identity Formation in the New Testament*, ed. Bengt Holmberg and Mikael Winninge, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 227 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 54.

17 Chrys., *Hom. 1 Cor.* 15:3.

[T]he general effects of social sanctions are more important for the community which applies them than for the individual who receives the sanctions. ... The explicit function of the expulsion was to rid the congregation of impurity (vv. 6–8), but a latent function of strengthening commitment to the community and its norms among non-deviant members may well have been an additional result of the disciplinary action.¹⁸

If the punishment were so severe as to cause others to recoil in concern for their well-being, physically or spiritually, they might be less prone to indulge in the same sin. Here again, a challenge surfaces in adequately explaining how incest differs qualitatively from other sins. This explanation assumes that incest must be treated differently though it does not expound as to why this is the case. Indeed, Paul's response would have had the desired effect of encouraging others to avoid incest, but the reason Paul chose this response for this situation, in contrast to other matters in the *ecclesia*, is not necessarily elucidated.

1.5 *Paul's Concern for Reputation*

These prior explanations of potential motives for Paul's urgency and severity are not altogether ill-founded. It is acknowledged that each finds some form of expression in the text itself and that they are logically applied to the circumstance. Nonetheless, these observations fail to differentiate this particular situation as it relates to Paul's urgency and severity, in contrast to the many other patterns of sin within the Corinthian congregation. This raises an alternate possibility that Paul's urgency and severity might be explained by his concern for the reputation of the *ecclesia*.

Paul's purpose in attending to the reputation of the *ecclesia* was rooted in the apostolic sense that the purpose of the *ecclesia* was witness. For better or for worse, reputation is inextricably linked to witness.¹⁹ As the *ecclesia* transitioned from a Jewish sect to an emerging entity within the Roman Empire, the perception of outsiders related to the beliefs and practices of the Christ-following community was relevant. The incestuous situation in Corinth posed a unique threat to the ability of the *ecclesia* to distinguish itself ethically from outsiders. Or, as will be demonstrated, an incestuous reputation would have assured that the *ecclesia* was viewed as distinct but in all the wrong ways

18 Gerald Harris, "The Beginnings of Church Discipline: 1 Corinthians 5," *New Testament Studies* 37, no. 1 (1991): 18. Cf. Paul Hartog, "Not Even Among the Pagans' (1 Cor 5:1): Paul and Seneca on Incest," in *The New Testament and Early Christian Literature in Greco-Roman Context: Studies in Honor of David E. Aune*, ed. David E. Aune and John Fotopoulos, *Supplements to Novum Testamentum* 122 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 52.

19 J.B. Tucker, *Reading 1 Corinthians* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2017), 73.

that distinction ought to have been achieved. Rather than exhibiting moral excellence, the *ecclesia* would have been castigated as barbaric.

The fact that endorsement of an incestuous relationship threatened not merely to mitigate but rather to devastate the witness of the *ecclesia* effectively explains both urgency and severity. Concern for reputation also explains the notable use of language which differentiates insiders from outsiders in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13. Exclusion was a means of preserving reputation (and thus witness), and it was accomplished by virtue of strong boundary definition to separate those who belonged from those who did not. A case for this fifth rationale for Paul's urgency and severity is developed in this book through multi-faceted argumentation. Chapter 2 quantifies Paul's implicit framework of group boundedness. While this is not a novel interpretation of the scriptural testimony, it is a critical point to establish for two reasons. First, Paul expresses this framework implicitly rather than explicitly. Second, the majority of contemporary Protestant ecclesiologies reflect a center-set approach instead of a bounded approach. Chapter 3 identifies the means of boundary demarcation for the *ecclesia* as a group. Paul emphasized ethical conformance to divine standards as a way of differentiating believers from unbelievers. The moral ethos of Corinth is particularly relevant here since sexual ethics are front and center in Paul's correspondence with the Corinthians. The challenge in Corinth, from Paul's perspective, was that the Christ-followers were failing to distinguish themselves ethically by virtue of endorsing the immoral man. Chapter 4 documents Roman disdain for incest. Beyond establishing the mere fact of an incest taboo among Romans, this chapter demonstrates the reasons why Romans saw incest as antithetical to the natural order. This historical analysis makes sense of Paul's assertion that even Gentiles do not allow incest, and it also lends credence to the argument that Paul is deeply concerned about the witness of the *ecclesia*. Chapter 5 demonstrates how the cultural phenomenon of honor and shame motivated Paul toward derogation of the incestuous man as a means of restoring witness. A new proposal for why incest would have been tolerated by the man and the congregation is also laid out in light of a cultural orientation toward honor and shame. Chapter 6 establishes the connection between sympotic meals and group identity formation. The Eucharist was an identity forming event for the *ecclesia*. Believers shaped their in-Christ identity through participation, and unbelievers also identified Christ-followers as adherents by virtue of their participation in the meal. Significantly, it was in the context of the Eucharistic meal that Paul chose to present and enforce the derogation of the immoral man.

Paul believed witness was accomplished through clear boundaries for the *ecclesia*. Understanding this social dynamic of boundedness and group demarcation is best accomplished via social scientific criticism. When combined

with traditional exegetical methods, such as linguistic inquiry, rhetorical analysis and historical criticism, the situation can be more accurately discerned and interpreted. Prior interpretations of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 have noted the language of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ found in the text; however, the correlation between Gentile perceptions of incest and Pauline boundary demarcation for the *ecclesia* has not been sufficiently explored.

The balance of chapter 1 explains the methodological suppositions that inform the analysis which follows. Social scientific approaches to the biblical text vary widely, and so an attempt has been made to explain precisely how social data is used in this interpretive process. In particular, the following section explains how anachronistic impositions of contemporary constructs on an ancient text might be avoided by utilizing social scientific methodologies in service of a historical-grammatical approach to the biblical text. In the subsequent section, important details regarding a social identity approach are quantified. As literature continues to develop in this field of biblical studies, scholarship often proceeds with the assumption that the reader lucidly understands social identity constructs. It is my hope that by articulating the history of social identity theory and its subsequent formulations, readers who are newly introduced to social psychology will find their bearings without needing to sort through volumes of research on the topic. The following section lays out definitions in regard to identity, ethics and ethos, as this is critical for chapters 2 and 3. Also discussed are honor, shame and shamelessness as a background to chapter 5. And, the basis of ritual theory is developed, since this forms substantial background to the material of chapter 6. Chapter 1 is then concluded with a basic summary of exegetical matters related to 1 Corinthians 5:1–13, including the argument of the text and an analysis of how textual variants affect the interpretation of the passage. If methodology is of less concern than interpretational conclusions for your inquiry into 1 Corinthians 5:1–13, it may be propitious to move straightaway to chapter 2. Otherwise, the reader will find in the balance of this chapter a very specific articulation of the basis of argumentation regarding Paul's concern for the reputation of the *ecclesia*.

2 Social Scientific Criticism: Heuristic Tool

Recent decades have witnessed a burgeoning appreciation of the ways in which the social sciences complement socio-historical criticism of the New Testament. This enterprise has been described as social scientific criticism, a broad designation for a swath of topics and methodologies. The common thread found within the diversity of social scientific criticism is the acknowledgment that both the writers and recipients of the New Testament were

embedded in a social context that is often assumed rather than specified within the text. Modern exegetes are benefited when they identify and explore the social dynamics in order to read the text as accurately as possible in light of the realities experienced by first-century Christ-followers.

2.1 *Emergence of Socio-Historical Approach*

The antecedent to social scientific criticism is found in the early twentieth-century scholarly impetus to understand the near eastern Mediterranean context.²⁰ Ernst Troeltsch introduced a scientific precision to exegetical analysis while integrating insights from the fields of theology, philosophy and the social sciences.²¹ Adolf Deissmann excelled as a philologist, but his emphasis on the manuscript evidence as a source of understanding social status influenced the field of biblical studies.²² Shirley Jackson Case and the socio-historical methods of the Chicago School explored the influence of the social environment for the shaping of early Christianity.²³ James Moffatt's commentary on 1 Corinthians emphasized many historical aspects, social data and archaeological finds as they related to the interpretation of the text.²⁴ While these earlier forays into socio-historical approaches to the biblical text were temporarily stifled by the influence of emerging theological trends in Rudolf

20 For documentation of nineteenth-century forerunners, see Ralph Hochschild, *Sozialgeschichtliche Exegese: Entwicklung, Geschichte und Methodik einer neutestamentlichen Forschungsrichtung*, *Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus* 42 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1999).

21 Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1912); Ernst Troeltsch, *Der Historismus und seine Überwindung: 5 Vorträge* (Hanover: Heise, 1924). See also Ernst Troeltsch, *Gesammelte Schriften: Aufsätze zur Geistesgeschichte und Religionssoziologie* (Scientia Verlag, 1925).

22 Gustav A. Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1909); Gustav A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910). See also Albrecht Gerber, *Deissmann the Philologist*, *Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 171 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 50–59.

23 Shirley J. Case, *The Evolution of Early Christianity: A Genetic Study of First-century Christianity in Relation to its Religious Environment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1914); Shirley J. Case, *The Social Origins of Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923). See also William J. Hynes, *Shirley Jackson Case and the Chicago School: The Socio-Historical Method*, *Society of Biblical Literature Biblical Scholarship in North America* 5 (Chico: Scholars Press, 1981), 35–86; Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Fathers Refounded: Protestant Liberalism, Roman Catholic Modernism, and the Teaching of Ancient Christianity in Early Twentieth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 293–323.

24 James Moffatt, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1938).

Bultmann's form criticism and Karl Barth's dialectical theology,²⁵ by the 1960s, Edwin A. Judge revived interest in the social aspects of New Testament studies by considering the social institutions of government (*politeia*), the household (*oikonomia*) and the church (*koinonia*).²⁶ In the 1970s, an effort was made to "lay out the theoretical and methodological foundation for a specifically social-scientific study of the Bible and its environment."²⁷ Seminal works in this stage of the discipline's development included Gerd Theissen's *Studien zur Soziologie des Urchristentums* (1979), which was shortly thereafter translated into English as *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (1982). Wayne A. Meeks published *The First Urban Christians* (1983) the following year, although he had already contributed to the development of social scientific approaches by applying conceptual articulations of the sociology of knowledge in *The Social Construction of Reality* by Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger to the interpretation of the Gospel of John.²⁸

Both Theissen and Meeks exhibited a socio-historical bent in their approach, viewing the social sciences as capable of confirming observed realities within the text of Scripture. They approached social scientific criticism as a descriptive process. Andrew D. Clarke followed in this descriptive socio-historical emphasis in *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1–6* (1993) as did Bruce W. Winter in *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (2001).²⁹ Scholars such as Theissen, Meeks, Clarke and Winter forged

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- 25 David G. Horrell, "Social Sciences Studying Formative Christian Phenomena: A Creative Movement," in *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches*, ed. Anthony J. Blasi, Paul-André Turcotte and Jean Duhaime (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2002), 6; John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 75 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 15–16; Andries van Aarde and Stephan Joubert, "Social-scientific Criticism," in *Focusing on the Message: New Testament Hermeneutics, Exegesis and Methods*, ed. A.B. Du Toit (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2009), 422–25.
- 26 E.A. Judge, *The Social Pattern of the Christian Groups in the First Century: Some Prolegomena to the Study of the New Testament Ideas of Social Obligation* (London: Tyndale Press, 1960), 18–48. See also Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 16.
- 27 John H. Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 18.
- 28 David G. Horrell, "Berger and New Testament Studies," in *Peter Berger and the Study of Religion*, ed. Linda Woodhead, Paul Heelas and David Martin (London: Routledge, 2001), 143; Wayne A. Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91, no. 1 (1972): 70–72; Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1991).
- 29 See discussion by David G. Horrell, "Whither Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation? Reflections on Contested Methodologies and the Future," in *After*

the interest in social context into a more nuanced subfield of biblical studies marked by social description.³⁰

2.2 *Development of Social Scientific Modelling*

Other social scientific scholars such as Bruce J. Malina, John J. Pilch, John H. Elliott and Philip F. Esler expanded their methodology from social description to social scientific modelling. Their approaches hypothesized interpretive conclusions by applying theories from the social sciences to the situation surrounding the biblical text.³¹ Such scholars proposed “models for distinguishing ancient patterns of social, economic and political organization and cultural scripts typical of preindustrial, agrarian societies from those of the modern-day interpreter.”³² This approach was developed largely within the confines of the Context Group, which was originally affiliated with the Westar Institute and the Jesus Seminar, though it broke out as its own entity shortly after formation.³³

As social scientific modelling became more widely used, the Context Group called for greater clarification in methodology.³⁴ Even though socio-historical description and social scientific modelling are differentiated approaches, the work in both areas is not necessarily antithetical. As Elliott notes, “social-scientific criticism is an expansion of the exegetical tool-kit and a complement,

the First Urban Christians: The Social-Scientific Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later, ed. David G. Horrell and Todd D. Still (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 6–11.

- 30 Stephen C. Barton, “Historical Criticism and Social-Scientific Perspectives in New Testament Study,” in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 61–89; M.R. Mulholland, “Sociological Criticism,” in *New Testament Criticism & Interpretation*, ed. David A. Black and David S. Dockery (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 301; Kenneth Berding, “The Hermeneutical Framework of Social-Scientific Criticism: How Much Can Evangelicals Get Involved?,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 75, no. 1 (2003): 5; van Aarde and Joubert, “Social-scientific Criticism,” 422–23.
- 31 John G. Gager, “Shall We Marry our Enemies: Sociology and the New Testament,” *Interpretation* 36, no. 3 (1982): 256–65. Gager provides an early clarification between social description and social scientific modelling.
- 32 John H. Elliott, “On Wooing Crocodiles for Fun and Profit: Confessions of an Intact Admirer,” in *Social Scientific Models for Interpreting the Bible: Essays by the Context Group in Honor of Bruce J. Malina*, ed. Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Biblical Interpretation Series* 53 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 11.
- 33 Berding, “The Hermeneutical Framework of Social-Scientific Criticism,” 10; van Aarde and Joubert, “Social-scientific Criticism,” 423. Of course, the earliest iteration of what became the Context Group was born out of the Westar Institute, which also created some measure of suspicion regarding the hermeneutical perspectives expressed in relation to social scientific criticism. Regarding the history of the Context Group in relation to the Westar Institute, see Elliott, “On Wooing Crocodiles for Fun and Profit,” 14–19.
- 34 Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?*, 29–30. See brief history of Context Group.

not an alternative, to social history and so-called social description.”³⁵ This second stream of social scientific criticism also produced several seminal works of note, two of which are particularly relevant to this study. Malina’s *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (1981) examines socio-cultural phenomena such as honor and shame, individualism and collectivism, kinship and marriage and purity/uncleanliness among other matters.³⁶ Richard L. Rohrbaugh’s *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (1996) presents several essays which made initial analyses of topics that would later become subjects of much more in-depth consideration, including kinship and honor/shame.³⁷

Elliot offers a helpful differentiation of the varying domains of social scientific exploration. His categories might be summarized as follows: 1) investigation of social data to elucidate some feature of ancient society, yet without analysis or synthesis, 2) integration of social, political and economic phenomena for the development of social history, 3) observational analysis of the social organization of the early Christian movement in terms its broader social context, 4) use of modelling for analysis of social phenomena shaping early Christianity and 5) use of social scientific processes to analyze specific biblical texts.³⁸ While social scientific scholars have debated the merits of these various approaches to social scientific criticism, most scholars in the field amicably recognize the value of a multi-faceted approach that seeks to avoid either undersubstantiation or overreach in conclusions.³⁹

Social scientific criticism is not a solitary discipline. Rather, it works complementarily alongside other forms of biblical criticism. Since social scientific criticism is a phase within the exegetical process that utilizes the social context to bring greater clarity to the literary meanings of the text, social scientific criticism can be used beneficially in tandem with historical-grammatical approaches to the Scripture. Evangelical scholars initially expressed a measure of skepticism related to certain presuppositions articulated by early proponents of social scientific criticism.⁴⁰ Despite this initial concern, many

35 Elliott, “On Wooing Crocodiles for Fun and Profit,” 12.

36 Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (London: SCM Press, 1981).

37 Richard L. Rohrbaugh, ed., *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996).

38 Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?*, 18–19. These points represent a distillation of Elliot’s key concepts.

39 David G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 9–32.

40 For instance, Malina distinguished between a ‘propositional model’ and a ‘scenario model’ in linguistic approaches to the text. He argued against a propositional model, defining the text of Scripture as “a succession of explicit and implicit scenes or schemes

Evangelical scholars subsequently embraced social scientific methodologies by adding their own, more precisely articulated presuppositions.⁴¹

It should be noted that social scientific criticism has more value than merely offering background to the biblical text, which suggests that such information may be optional, or at the very least ancillary, in the interpretive process. According to Elliott, social scientific criticism might be defined as

that phase of the exegetical task which analyzes the social and cultural dimensions of the text and of its environmental context through the utilization of the perspectives, theory, models, and research of the social sciences. As a component of the historical-critical method of exegesis, Social-Scientific Criticism investigates biblical texts as meaningful configurations of language intended to communicate between composers and audiences. In this process it studies not only (1) the social aspects of the form and content of texts but also the conditioning factors and intended consequences of the communication process, (2) the correlation of the text's linguistic, literary, theological (ideological), and social dimensions and (3) the manner in which this textual communication was both a reflection of and response to a specific social and cultural context, that is, how it was designed to serve as an effective vehicle of social interaction and an instrument of social as well as literary and theological consequence.⁴²

Thus, proponents of a social scientific approach would argue for the essentiality of social data for the interpretation of the text, not to the detriment of other forms of criticism, but as an effective complement to them.⁴³

This study approaches the matter of Paul's ecclesiological conceptions with a combination of socio-historical descriptions and social scientific modelling,

in which the mental representation evoked in the mind of the reader consists of a series of settings, episodes, or models deriving directly from the mind of the reader, coupled with appropriate alterations to these settings, episodes, or models as directed by the text." Bruce J. Malina, "The Social Sciences and Biblical Interpretation: Reflections on Tradition and Practice," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible & Theology* 36, no. 3 (1982): 230.

41 Berding, "The Hermeneutical Framework of Social-Scientific Criticism," 3–22; J.B. Tucker, *You Belong to Christ: Paul and the Formation of Social Identity in 1 Corinthians 1–4* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010); J.B. Tucker, *Remain in Your Calling: Paul and the Continuation of Social Identities in 1 Corinthians* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2011); Gager, "Shall We Marry our Enemies," 257.

42 Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?*, 7.

43 Philip F. Esler, *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context* (London: Routledge, 1995), 2–3.

with an emphasis on how the social and historical data illuminate aspects of the text which may remain implicitly obscured without the utilization of such information.⁴⁴ These social scientific approaches combine with a classic exegetical analysis of the biblical text to formulate conclusions related to the situation of the immoral man and Paul's response. Careful socio-historical research has been undertaken on the matter of a Roman view of incest as well as a Roman concept of honor and shame. This sociological and anthropological data has been evaluated with the assistance of social-psychological models.

The term 'model' is used to describe the distillation of abstract concepts for the sake of organizing observations to serve as a point of reference in the interpretive task.⁴⁵ The term 'framework' is used interchangeably with 'model,' both having the meaning of a synthesized construct that organizes pertinent information. Models are heuristic in the sense that they provide a conceptual structure within which particular information might be evaluated. As noted by Ernest van Eck, a model "is consciously structured and systematically arranged in order to serve as a speculative instrument for the purpose of organizing, profiling and interpreting certain specific data."⁴⁶ The relationship between social data and modelling is significant.

The goal of this study is not merely to gather social data which might bear relevance, but rather to apply a social-psychological model to the sociological and anthropological information available regarding the Mediterranean context of ancient Corinth. As described by van Staden and van Aarde, "The narrative world, created by the text, should be compared to the everyday world to which the text belongs in order for those elements within the narrative world that are new, different or strange, to be discernible and identifiable."⁴⁷ This is not undertaken by way of imposing modern constructs anachronistically on the biblical text, but rather in order to elucidate unspoken social realities

44 Chapter 4 addresses the matter of a Roman view of incest and is primarily socially descriptive in nature. Chapters 5 and 6, on the other hand, apply anthropological models to derive conclusions regarding the situation in Corinth. Thus, it can be demonstrated here that social description and social modelling both have value and can be used synergistically.

45 Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 17–19; Thomas F. Carney, *The Shape of the Past: Models and Antiquity* (Lawrence: Coronado Press, 1975), 9; van Aarde and Joubert, "Social-scientific Criticism," 430–33; Ernest van Eck, *Galilee and Jerusalem in Mark's Story of Jesus: A Narratological and Social Scientific Reading*, Hervormde Teologiese Studies HTS Supplementum 7 (Pretoria, 1995), 156–62; Esler, *Modelling Early Christianity*, 4–7.

46 van Eck, *Galilee and Jerusalem in Mark's Story of Jesus*, 160.

47 P. van Staden and A.G. van Aarde, "Social Description or Social-scientific Interpretation: A Survey of Modern Scholarship," *HTS Teologiese Studies* 47, no. 1 (1991): 60.

which explain the urgency and severity of the apostle Paul related to the situation in Corinth.⁴⁸

Social scientific modelling has the benefit of quantifying presuppositions related to the social context of a biblical text. Because a model brings the abstract into concrete expression, the validity of the construct can be evaluated carefully by others. The model employed in this social scientific exploration of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 relies on the ideological frameworks of others in the disciplines of social psychology, sociology, anthropology and biblical studies. The primary model utilized is social identity theory and self-categorization theory as put forth by Henri Tajfel⁴⁹ and John Turner.⁵⁰ These theories are supplemented by a closer look at subjective group dynamics as researched by Jose M. Marques,⁵¹ which is very helpful in describing the social dynamic within a group when significant deviation from group norms eventuates. This assembly of social identity studies, along with other aspects of social identity research that are tangentially relevant, will be referred to with the superordinate term ‘social identity approach.’⁵²

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- 48 “Tested models allow scholars to make controllable deductions and (re)constructions of missing information on the basis of known data about the interaction between the earliest Jesus-followers and their surrounding contexts.” van Aarde and Joubert, “Social-scientific Criticism,” 430.
- 49 Henri Tajfel, *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (London: Academic Press, 1978).
- 50 J.C. Turner, R.J. Brown, and H. Tajfel, “Social Comparison and Group Interest Ingroup Favouritism,” *European Journal of Social Psychology* 9, no. 2 (1979); John C. Turner, *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self Categorization Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).
- 51 Jose M. Marques, “The Black-Sheep Effect: Out-Group Homogeneity in Social Comparison Settings,” in *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances*, ed. Dominic Abrams and Michael A. Hogg (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1990).
- 52 Michael A. Hogg utilizes the term ‘social identity approach’ in preference to ‘social identity theory’ since the latter “is sometimes too narrowly equated with only one aspect—the analysis of intergroup relations and social change as a function of positive distinctiveness.” Michael A. Hogg, “Social Identity Theory,” in *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories*, ed. Peter J. Burke (Stanford: Stanford Social Sciences, 2006), 111. See also clarification on the nature of this term in Rupert Brown, “The Social Identity Approach: Appraising the Tajfellian Legacy,” *British Journal of Social Psychology* 59 (2020): 5. New Testament scholars have also adopted this term as descriptive of the multivalent components of social identity theory and continued research in this area of social psychology: “The strength of the social identity approach is that it is not just a single theory but rather a constellation of theories and ideas that provides different perspectives to understand intergroup behavior. Providing important insight into intergroup behavior, it also incorporates a way to understand the relationship between the individual and the group, keeping them distinct but in a dialectical relationship within the social context.” A.S. Russell, “A Genealogy of Social Identity Theory,” in Tucker and Kuecker, *T&T Clark Social Identity Commentary on the New Testament*, 22.

Equally as important as the social-psychological models noted here is the application of this social identity approach within New Testament studies, for here too we find rubrics for how modelling might be accomplished. Philip F. Esler pioneered the use of social identity research for exegetical process in his commentary on Galatians.⁵³ J. Brian Tucker has been prolific in his development and application of the social identity approach, particularly regarding 1 Corinthians.⁵⁴ Alistair S. May employed a social identity approach to his analysis of Pauline sexual ethics with specific consideration of 1 Corinthians 5–7.⁵⁵ Adam G. White has recently provided a brief, yet helpful template for use of subjective group dynamics, with specific attention to the situation of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13.⁵⁶ A more thorough description of how this work builds upon these biblical scholars will be undertaken further on in this chapter.⁵⁷

53 Philip F. Esler, *Galatians*, New Testament Readings (London: Routledge, 1998).

54 Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*; Tucker, *Remain in Your Calling*; J.B. Tucker and Coleman A. Baker, eds., *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); J.B. Tucker and Aaron Kuecker, eds., *T&T Clark Social Identity Commentary on the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 2020).

55 Alistair S. May, *The Body for the Lord: Sex and Identity in 1 Corinthians 5–7*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 278 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 58–80.

56 White, *Paul, Community, and Discipline*, 197–202.

57 There is additional scholarship, apart from these social identity studies in biblical studies, which is also very valuable to the social scientific approach undertaken in this study. In chapter 3, it will be proposed that ingroup boundaries are defined by ethical considerations in Paul's conceptualization of the *ecclesia*. As such, Jan G. van der Watt's articulation of ethics has been adopted as a means by which to analyze boundary demarcation in the Corinthian congregation. Jan G. van der Watt, ed., *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006). The works of Michael Wolter and Ruben Zimmermann also informs this discussion of ethic, ethos and identity. Ruben Zimmermann and Jan G.D. van der Watt, *Moral Language in the New Testament: The Interrelatedness of Language and Ethics in Early Christian Writings*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe 296 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); Michael Wolter, "Let No One Seek His Own, but Each One the Other's' (1 Corinthians 10:24): Pauline Ethics According to 1 Corinthians," in van der Watt, *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament*; Michael Wolter, *Theologie und Ethos im frühen Christentum: Studien zu Jesus, Paulus und Lukas*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 236 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009); Ruben Zimmermann, "The 'Implicit Ethics' of New Testament Writings: A Draft on the New Methodology for Analysing New Testament Ethics," *Neotestamentica* 43, no. 2 (2009); Ruben Zimmermann, "Mission Versus Ethics in 1 Corinthians 9?: 'Implicit Ethics' as an Aid in Analysing New Testament Texts," *HTS Teologiese Studies* 68, no. 1 (2012). David G. Horrell's application of ethics within a social scientific consideration of 1 Corinthians provides a baseline for furthering the ideas found in this study. While Horrell makes brief mention of social identity theory, he does not build an extensive map between his concepts of identity and a social

In sum, this work does not forge a new model *per se* by which to consider the exegetical questions of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13. Rather, it correlates and develops existing models within social scientific research to propose new conclusions about Paul's urgency and severity regarding the situation of the immoral

identity perspective; nevertheless, he does connect the matters of identity, group boundedness, ethics and sensitivity to outsiders. David G. Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference: A Contemporary Reading of Paul's Ethics*, T&T Clark Cornerstones (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); David G. Horrell, *The Making of Christian Morality: Reading Paul in Ancient and Modern Contexts* (Chicago: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2019). Because this work considers ethics in terms of their utilization for identity clarification, Kobus Kok's work on Pauline sensitivity toward outsiders is also accessed as a model for applying social scientific studies within the exegetical process. Jacobus Kok, "Mission and Ethics in 1 Corinthians: Reconciliation, Corporate Solidarity and Other-Regard as Missionary Strategy in Paul," *HTS Teologiese Studies* 68, no. 1 (2012); Jacobus Kok et al., eds., *Sensitivity towards Outsiders: Exploring the Dynamic Relationship between Mission and Ethics in the New Testament and Early Christianity*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe 364 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014). Social psychology focuses on the ideological overlap between anthropology and psychology. Social identity theory, supplemented by anthropological concepts of honor/shame, kinship or ritual, provides a model by which to undertake the exegetical task. In chapter 5, discussion of Paul's adoption and revision of the honor/shame dynamic in the first-century Roman context is based upon the work of Julian Pitt-Rivers. Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," in *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. John G. Peristiany (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); John G. Peristiany and Julian A. Pitt-Rivers, *Honour and Grace in Anthropology*, Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Pitt-Rivers models have been applied in New Testament scholarship by Bruce Malina and David A. deSilva. Malina, *The New Testament World*; Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey, "Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. Jerome H. Neyrey (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993); David A. deSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995); David A. deSilva, *The Hope of Glory: Honor Discourse and New Testament Interpretation* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999); David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2000); David A. deSilva, "Turning Shame into Honor: The Pastoral Strategy of 1 Peter," in *The Shame Factor: How Shame Shapes Society*, ed. Robert Jewett (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011); David A. deSilva, "Paul, Honor, and Shame," in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, 2nd ed., ed. J.P. Sampley, 2 vols., 1 (London: Bloomsbury, 2016). In chapter 6, the importance of ritual to Paul's inculcation of ingroup identity in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 is underlain by ritual theory found in Victor Turner and Catherine Bell. Turner, *The Ritual Process*; Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. With specific reference to the importance of meals in the ritual context of the *ecclesia*, the work of Hal Taussig, Dennis Smith and Matthias Klinghardt is instrumental. Dennis E. Smith and Hal E. Taussig, *Many Tables: The Eucharist in the New Testament and Liturgy Today* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2001); Dennis E. Smith and Hal Taussig, eds., *Meals in the Early Christian World: Social Formation, Experimentation, and Conflict at the Table* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Matthias Klinghardt and Hal Taussig, eds., *Mahl und religiöse Identität im frühen Christentum*, Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter 56 (Tübingen: Francke, 2012).

man. As noted above, a clear demarcation of the models utilized in the exegetical process provides an opportunity for more effective evaluation of the conclusions.⁵⁸

2.3 *Heuristic Value of a Social Identity Approach*

The concept of heuristic value is often cited in reference to social scientific approaches to New Testament exegesis.⁵⁹ The idea of evaluating an ancient text through the lens of modern theories rightly brings a measure of caution regarding anachronism. Moreover, the use of the social sciences as a framework

⁵⁸ Social scientific criticism has been particularly useful in analyzing the Corinthian correspondence. From the onset of the movement, scholars have noted the abundance of social data in 1 Corinthians. The close tie between the text and the social environment lends itself to social scientific considerations. A brief summary of key works in this regard is helpful. This book seeks to contribute in similar manner as the works itemized here, offering a social scientific analysis of the Corinthian context as applied to the matter of Paul's conceptualization of group boundedness. Edward Adams considers Paul's cosmology. Edward Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul's Cosmological Language*, Studies of the New Testament and Its World (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000). Mary Katherine Birge reviews Jewish and Hellenistic literature for patterns of use in kinship language and explains Paul's apologetic for unity in terms of his adoption of kinship term conventions. Mary K. Birge, *The Language of Belonging: A Rhetorical Analysis of Kinship Language in First Corinthians*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology 31 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002). Stephen J. Chester evaluates the Corinthians' concepts of conversion in light of conversion theories from the social sciences. Stephen J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2005). Andrew D. Clarke notes the influence of concurrent secular social models of leadership on complications within the Corinthian *ecclesia*. Andrew D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-historical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1–6*, 2nd ed. (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2006). Robert Dutch quantifies an ancient model of education and then demonstrates how the adoption of this model in Corinth answers exegetical questions surfaced in the letter. Robert S. Dutch, *The Educated Elite in 1 Corinthians: Education and Community Conflict in Graeco-Roman Context*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 271 (London: T&T Clark, 2005). Adam G. White traces acceptance of Apollos over Paul to Corinthian conceptualizations of higher education. Adam G. White, *Where Is the Wise Man: Graeco-Roman Education as a Background to the Divisions in 1 Corinthians 1–4*, Library of New Testament Studies 536 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015). Mark T. Finney explains how Greco-Roman concepts of honor and shame affected interactions within Corinth. Mark T. Finney, *Honour and Conflict in the Ancient World: 1 Corinthians in Its Greco-Roman Social Setting*, Library of New Testament Studies 460 (London: T&T Clark, 2011). Cavan W. Concannon intertwines western notions of race and ethnicity with the complexity of the very same issues in Paul's social environment. Cavan W. Concannon, *'When You Were Gentiles': Specters of Ethnicity in Roman Corinth and Paul's Corinthian Correspondence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014). Social scientific contributions using social identity theory are noted further on and are not included here.

⁵⁹ Tucker and Baker, *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, 45, 61, 93, 117, 530.

for conclusions regarding the biblical text also warrants scrutiny. One might reasonably ask how a social psychological theory from the twentieth century might have any relative bearing on the interpretation of first-century documents. Several answers might be given to this query, and five assertions are made here to clarify the relationship between social psychology as an interpretive framework and the text of the New Testament in the approach taken within this book.

First, it might be noted that two lenses bring an object into sharper focus. Examining human behavior and thought processes from the vantage of theology and psychology offers a more clarified understanding of the matter at hand. Psychology and theology are parallel disciplines. Each examines the non-corporeal aspects of human existence, each uses a distinct vernacular and each derives conclusions from different sources. Theology looks to sacred writings sourced from the divine, while psychology offers empirical conclusions regarding human behavior from scientific study. It is the parallel nature of these two disciplines which makes them effective partners in biblical exegesis. Social identity theory provides explicit quantification of processes at work implicitly in the world of the text. The findings of social psychology might be applied to the “shared human condition.”⁶⁰ This is not to say that the psychological principles are determinative of what happens in each case. Rather, they are general descriptive concepts that can inform exegetical understanding.

Second, social psychology provides valid and insightful data regarding the context into which a text is written. Esler correctly observes the scholarly propensity to elevate the “material side of culture”⁶¹ (e.g., archaeology) over social aspects of culture within textual analysis. When a more nuanced evaluation of the context includes social features, it is possible to avoid privileging theological readings which might be disconnected from the context itself. At the very least, utilizing the social data will provide new frameworks that might “re-situate familiar textual data.”⁶²

Third, social psychology approaches ingroup norms (or, in the language of theology, ethics) in terms of social identity. Utilizing social psychology in exegesis prevents the extraction of ethical standards from the text for independent examination, opting instead to place the ethical standards within the context of the community which is applying them. In this sense, the values of the original readers are more determinative in the interpretation rather than

60 Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*, 40.

61 Esler, *Galatians*, 39.

62 Esler, *Galatians*, 40.

examining them as platitudinal principles which are dislodged from their original constructs.

Fourth, social psychology assists exegetes influenced by the cultural construct of individualism in considering the collectivistic nature of the ancient Mediterranean context. The dynamics of social identity are present in both individualistic and collectivistic cultural orientations; however, social psychology provides beneficial handles for understanding group dynamics when the concepts and processes are far from intuitive. Group oriented cultures have explicit vehicles by which norms are articulated. Understanding these processes from the lens of social psychology is instructive to scholars who work within contexts where group identity is minimized and less quantified. Social psychology becomes a means by which the interpreter ably moves into the world of the original audience.

Fifth, social psychology has the capacity to answer questions unaddressed directly by the text. If the biblical text specified a motive or a rationale for behavior in contradiction to the theories of social psychology, it would be necessary to give priority to the internal evidence of the text itself. This hermeneutical principle remains stalwartly intact. However, when biblical texts leave a motive or rationale unexplained, other sources such as social psychology may offer a salient framework for evaluation.

Despite the above noted benefits of social psychology (and social scientific criticism) for biblical interpretation, exegesis ought to utilize a hierarchical prioritization of tools. The basis of all exegesis is lexical and syntactical data which formulate understandable ideas and arguments. The exegetical process then summarizes the ideological formations of the words as they relate to the larger work. Of course, genre must also be factored in along with the immediate literary context. Pertinent historical, cultural and situational data comes to bear. The introduction of interpretational data from social psychological observations must never supplant these fundamental building blocks in the exegetical process. Social psychology must serve as a barrier against inappropriate usage of available data, fill in gaps that may not be discernible from the text itself and serve as a secondary confirmation of suppositions discerned through research. The use of social psychology should remain a descriptive and heuristic process rather than a prescriptive one.⁶³

63 As noted by Esler, further exploration of the burgeoning literature on social identity approach by biblical scholars will help “not only pose new questions to New Testament texts but also to organize the answers they prompt (to ‘draw the lines between the dots’) in socially realistic ways—the twin goals ... of all social scientific interpretation.” Philip F. Esler, “Outline of Social Identity Theory,” in Tucker and Baker, *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, 38–39.

In the end, the use of a modern academic discipline as a tool for exegesis underscores the ongoing relevance of the biblical text. Rather than being an anachronistic imposition, social scientific approaches yield greater understanding of the text. As noted by Aaron Kuecker, “Social-scientific approaches offer helpful checks against tacitly proceeding under the myth of presuppositionless exegesis and its attendant anachronistic or ethnocentric interpretations.”⁶⁴ Two categories of social scientific models are utilized in this study: psychological and sociological. The subsequent sections explain first the social identity approach as it relates to the analysis of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 which follows. Then, the sociological models related to identity/ethics/ethos, honor/shame/shamelessness and dining ritual will be explained, followed by a description of the application of the models by scholars in biblical studies.

3 Psychological Models: Social Identity

Social psychologist Henri Tajfel produced the foundational research regarding social identity theory. An individual's social identity is derived from membership in a group, which is “a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership in it.”⁶⁵ It should be noted that the ‘group’ as defined by Tajfel and Turner is a contrived entity, derived from the perceptions of its members. These individuals need not know each other or have any relations in common, other than shared perceptions of belonging. Nevertheless, this definition of the term ‘group’ within social psychology does not preclude the circumstance where group members do participate in meaningful relationships with one another.

Thus, social identity might be defined as “that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.”⁶⁶ Tajfel's mentee and co-worker, John C. Turner,

64 Aaron Kuecker, *The Spirit and the ‘Other’: Social Identity, Ethnicity and Intergroup Reconciliation in Luke-Acts*, Library of New Testament Studies 444 (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 24–25.

65 Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, “An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict,” in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel (Monterey: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1979), 40.

66 Tajfel, *Differentiation Between Social Groups*, 63. Fundamental concepts of Tajfel's work are articulated in this monograph.

furthered the scholarship of social identity theory in *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory* (1987) by exploring the mechanics of how social identity comes to be attached to a specific group and how members differentiate themselves vis-à-vis ingroup and outgroup designations. The work of Michael A. Hogg is also prominent in the field, as reflected in *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (2006) as well as numerous handbooks and other texts on social psychology.⁶⁷ The social identity approach has been much discussed, yet generally accepted as a groundbreaking contribution to social psychology. Notably, the utility of the social identity approach has been recognized by multiple fields outside of psychology, including business, leadership studies and political science. The discipline of biblical studies is no exception to this trend of appropriating the value of the social identity approach for research purposes.

3.1 *Henri Tajfel's Renegotiation of Identity*

Henri Tajfel's interest in social grouping grew out of his personal experiences. Tajfel was a Polish Jew studying chemistry at the Sorbonne in France from 1937–1939. The rise of Nazism and the outbreak of World War II affected the trajectory of his studies. He joined the French army in 1939 but by 1940 the Germans captured him as a prisoner of war, which he remained until the end of the war in 1945. Tajfel considered carefully how to present himself to the German officials. While he was both Jewish and Polish, he also appeared quite French, being fluent in the French language and a soldier in the French army.

Tajfel convinced himself that it would be best to reveal his Jewish heritage but to disguise his Polish ethnicity, being well aware of the severe persecution directed toward Polish Jews. As a result, he was interned with French prisoners in camps in Germany and Austria.⁶⁸ He later attributed this decision regarding how he presented himself to the Nazi authorities as a contributing factor to his survival. Following the war, Tajfel assisted in the resettlement of Jewish

67 Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (London: Routledge, 1988); Michael A. Hogg and Joel Cooper, *The SAGE Handbook of Social Psychology*, Sage Social Psychology Program (London: SAGE, 2007); Michael A. Hogg and Scott Tindale, eds., *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Group Processes* (Williston: John Wiley & Sons, 2008); John M. Levine and Michael A. Hogg, eds., *Encyclopedia of Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2010); Graham M. Vaughan and Michael A. Hogg, *Social Psychology*, 7th ed. (Frenchs Forest: Pearson Australia, 2014).

68 William P. Robinson and Henri Tajfel, *Social Groups and Identities: Developing the Legacy of Henri Tajfel*, International Series in Social Psychology (Oxford: Psychology Press, 1996), 2.

refugees under the auspices of Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (1945–1949) and International Refugee Organization of the United Nations (1949–1951).⁶⁹

Tajfel was deeply affected by his own experiences as well as those whom he helped to resettle. The ways in which ethnic identification affected his survival during the Holocaust and the ways in which it impacted Jews resettling into diverse cultural contexts following the war gave impetus for further research.⁷⁰ As he recounts in his own words:

In May 1945, after I had been disgorged with hundreds of others from a special train arriving at the Gare d'Orsay in Paris with its crammed load of prisoners-of-war returning from camps in Germany, I soon discovered that hardly anyone I knew in 1939—including my family—was left alive. In one way or another, this led to six years of working in various ways and in various European countries for organizations which bravely tried with insufficient means to stem the flood of misery; their task was the rehabilitation of victims of war—children and adults. This was the beginning of my interest in social psychology.⁷¹

Added to these observations from personal experience was the larger, more compelling question of why a civilized nation such as Germany had committed the Holocaust. Tajfel sensed that there must be illumination regarding this question, perhaps rooted in something less reductionist than the prevailing concepts of social psychology at the time. Tajfel reacted to theories which explained behavior primarily in terms of the individual, such as the approach of Floyd Allport⁷² in the period leading up to World War II or that of Theodor

69 Robinson and Tajfel, *Social Groups and Identities*, 3; Gustav Jahoda, "Tajfel, Henri," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000*, ed. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, 53 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 670–71.

70 As noted by Tajfel's colleague John C. Turner: "[F]or those who knew Henri, it was always clear that, much more than for most, his social psychology, the problems he studied, the theories he proposed and the approaches he saw as necessary and significant, remain closely bound up with the tragedies and experiences of his earlier life." Robinson and Tajfel, *Social Groups and Identities*, 4.

71 Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1–2.

72 F.H. Allport, "The Influence of the Group upon Association and Thought," *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 3 (1920): 159–82; Floyd H. Allport, *Social Psychology* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924).

Adorno,⁷³ who explained the Holocaust in terms of individual tendency toward authoritarianism.

Tajfel believed there needed to be a more universal psychological explanation for behavior. He was particularly interested in understanding why human aggression existed in certain contexts yet was absent in others.⁷⁴ Tajfel hypothesized that prejudice came neither from individual personality tendencies nor biological determinism but rather resulted from the cognitive processes of categorization and group affiliation. Aligning his thinking with Muzafer Sherif in his realistic conflict theory experiments,⁷⁵ Tajfel affirmed that social forces were determinative in interpersonal choices.⁷⁶ This set Tajfel on a trajectory to examine the causation for group identification. In specific, he sought to understand what was the minimum affiliation required in order to bring about some measure of identity with a group.

He devised an experiment that eliminated self-interest and personal bias such that intergroup bias might be observed. Participants were shown two works of art and subsequently told that they were assigned to a group based on their preferences related to the paintings. In reality, the groups were randomly assigned. The participants were then asked to give away money to other participants in the experiment. Each person allocated funds by selecting codes which represented other participants. The participants did not know the identity of the persons associated with the codes. Nevertheless, the sheet included a parenthetical designation of group assignment next to the unique participant codes. By noting the patterns in awarding money, the experiment demonstrated that, with all other factors eliminated, group affiliation in and of itself was sufficient to create ingroup bias.⁷⁷ The study concluded that

in a situation in which the ... [study participants'] own interests were not involved in their decisions, in which alternative strategies were available

73 Theodor W. Adorno, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1950). The research of Leonard Berkowitz might be added to the list of scholars to which Tajfel reacted. Berkowitz explained social conflict as deriving from an instinctual predisposition toward aggression. See Leonard Berkowitz, *Aggression: A Social Psychological Analysis* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962).

74 Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories*, 18–24, 127–131; Robinson and Tajfel, *Social Groups and Identities*.

75 Muzafer Sherif, *Experimental Study of Positive and Negative Intergroup Attitudes between Experimentally Produced Groups: Robbers Cave Study* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1954).

76 Hogg, "Social Identity Theory," 112.

77 Henri Tajfel et al., "Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 1, no. 2 (1971): 165–166.

that would maximize the total benefits to a group of boys who knew each other well, they acted in a way determined by an *ad hoc* intergroup categorization.⁷⁸

Tajfel labeled this discovery the minimal group paradigm. His experiment justified that social differentiation occurred with the propensity toward ingroup favoritism. In *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (1978), Tajfel nuanced the difference between individual identity and social identity.⁷⁹ Both individual and social identity are self-construed; however, individual identity speaks of oneself in terms of personal attributes or in relation to a significant other (dyadic relationship). Social identity is an aspect of individual self-concept related to how the individual understands himself or herself in relation to others. This quest for understanding and contextualization on the part of the individual leads to the development of a social construct that organizes that individual's perceptions of reality. A group is three or more people sharing the same social identity, meaning that they "identify and evaluate themselves in the same way and have the same definition of who they are, what attributes they have, and how they relate to and differ from people who are not in their group or who are in specific out-groups."⁸⁰ The social categorization which occurs as a result of grouping with others becomes a critical component of a person's self-conception.

The motivation for categorization might be described by two concepts: self enhancement and uncertainty reduction. Human beings are given to self enhancement. Because their individual identity is associated with the social identity, the positive attributions toward the social identity are seen as constructive to the individual. Humans also wish to reduce the uncertainty present within their social contexts. Group affiliation offers some form of prototypical template for how one ought to behave and connects the individual with a more clearly defined whole. The entitativity of the social identity brings stability.⁸¹

Self-categorization theory, explored primarily by John C. Turner as an outgrowth of Tajfel's research, also describes the process of depersonalization. When this occurs, a group member subsumes his individual uniqueness under his perception of group norms such that the perception of how a group member should act becomes influential in the choices of the individual.

78 Tajfel et al., "Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour," 176.

79 Tajfel, *Differentiation Between Social Groups*, 27–28.

80 Hogg, "Social Identity Theory," 115.

81 Hogg, "Social Identity Theory," 120–21.

Depersonalization elucidates the complex interplay between the individual and society. Turner, et al. note that depersonalization “is the process whereby people cease to be unique individuals and become subjectively the exemplars or representatives of society or some part of it, the living, self-aware embodiments of the historical, cultural and politico-ideological forces and movements which formed them.”⁸² Self-categorization theory acknowledges the interrelated natures of individual and social identities in that a person’s individual choices are affected by their social perceptions even though it is simultaneously true that one’s individual perspective forms his social identity. Turner also enriched social identity theory by demonstrating that opposing groups defined by ingroup and outgroup boundaries might both become a subgroup to a superordinate identity.⁸³ Thus, members of various groups are capable of maintaining distinctions and similarities simultaneously. He acknowledged the complex reality of nested identities, where an individual may simultaneously self-categorize with different groups based on varying attributes. Turner described how these affiliations are prioritized in circumstances where multiple social identities are salient.

3.2 *Further Developments in Social Identity Research*

Social identity theory and self-categorization theory have served as a basis for numerous other explorations within the social identity approach. One example which is relevant to the analysis of this study is the black sheep effect, which describes the phenomenon of extreme judgment toward ingroup members who are at the edge of norm conformance. This phenomenon addresses the disparity between derogation and ingroup favoritism. Foundational to the social identity approach are the principles of social differentiation, boundary definition and ingroup favoritism. The initial work on social identity focused on intergroup differentiation with little consideration of intragroup

82 Turner, *Rediscovering the Social Group*, 206.

83 Muzafer Sherif, *In Common Predicament: Social Psychology of Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966); Marilyn B. Brewer, “Superordinate Goals versus Superordinate Identity as Bases of Intergroup Cooperation,” in *Social Identity Processes: Trends in Theory and Research*, ed. Dora Capozza and Rupert Brown (London: SAGE, 2000). The concept of superordinate goals was foundational to Sherif’s research, which Tajfel built upon in his development of social identity theory. The more complex idea of superordinate identity describes the ways in which an individual views himself or herself as similar to another even though he or she maintains differentiation at the subgroup level. The shared features create identity at the superordinate level, and the diversities encourage subgroup membership. For example, Irish citizens can be both male and female, such that the superordinate category of ‘Irish’ is not revoked by a diametric differentiation of gender.

comparison. Tajfel's minimal group paradigm experiment was aimed at determining the minimum threshold for creating social identity within a group.⁸⁴ As a result, Tajfel described ingroup favoritism in terms of comparison between the whole ingroup and the whole outgroup. As noted by social psychologist Jose M. Marques,

Due, perhaps, to the compelling nature of the well-known accentuation process in intergroup perception, developments of SIT have focused mainly on the outcomes of intergroup differentiation and subjective assimilation of self to group, than on whether intragroup differentiation may contribute to the maintenance of a positive social identity.⁸⁵

As social identity theory studies increased and new studies built upon previous ones, the phenomenon of intragroup comparisons was also examined.⁸⁶ In specific, the presence of group members who deviated from prototypical norms required analysis. Marques and Dominic Abrams analyzed evaluative judgments of normative ingroup members toward deviant members. They concluded that deviant members are derogated by the ingroup, often with greater consequence than outgroup members for similar deviations from the group's norms. Deviant ingroup members challenge the agreed-upon norms, thus threatening to undermine the social identity of the group. The potential impact of a prevailing outlier explains the strong response undertaken toward ingroup members. Hogg, et al. suggest that three criteria affect the reaction to the deviant member: "(1) whether the deviant occupies a position on the boundary with the outgroup or remote from it, (2) whether there is a threat to the group's valence or its distinctiveness, and (3) whether the deviant publicly attributes his or her deviance to self or to the group."⁸⁷ The typical ingroup favoritism observed in social identity theory is set aside in the case of such deviations.

One might hypothesize that if an ingroup and outgroup member exhibited identical deviant behavior, ingroup members would rally around the ingroup deviant in accordance with the principle of ingroup favoritism. On the contrary, it was observed that an ingroup deviant was consistently evaluated more

84 Tajfel et al., "Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour," 149–78.

85 Marques, "The Black-Sheep Effect," 132.

86 José M. Marques, Elisabete M. Robald, and Susana A. Rocha, "Ingroup Bias and the 'Black Sheep' Effect: Assessing the Impact of Social Identification and Perceived Variability on Group Judgments," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 22, no. 4 (1992): 331–32.

87 Hogg, "Social Identity Theory," 126.

harshly than outgroup members engaging in identical or similar behavior. As noted by Marques et al.,

Unlikable ingroup members are also ingroup members and therefore their evaluation should also reflect straightforward ingroup bias (they should be liked more than outgroup members). However, because they are unlikable, they contribute negatively to the overall image of the group. Thus, ingroup favoritism takes a paradoxical form in which group-level bias in favor of the ingroup is reflected in evaluative rejection of the specific 'deviant' relative to a comparable outgroup member.⁸⁸

In a series of five experiments and two studies published by J.M. Marques, V.M. Yzerbyt and J.Ph. Leyens, this phenomenon of extreme judgment toward members at the edge of norm conformance was labeled the black sheep effect.⁸⁹ The interplay between intergroup and intragroup comparisons is described as subjective group dynamics and defined as "a process by which people maximize and sustain descriptive intergroup differentiation while simultaneously maximizing and sustaining the relative validity of prescriptive in-group norms through intragroup differentiation."⁹⁰

The causation for the black sheep effect is rooted in how deviance affects group identity. Deviant ingroup members pose a greater threat to identity

88 Jose M. Marques et al., "Social Categorization, Social Identification, and Rejection of Deviant Group Members," in Hogg and Tindale, *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Group Processes*, 401.

89 Note that Marques, et al. did not restrict the black sheep effect to non-prototypical ingroup members. The studies evaluated extremity of judgment in terms of likable *and* unlikable ingroup members. Ingroup members exhibiting the group norms in an exemplary way received more extreme positive treatment. Likewise, ingroup members doing the opposite were derogated. Since the focus of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 is an individual who deviated from ingroup norms, this analysis focuses on the derogative aspects within the black sheep effect. See the initial studies as follows: José M. Marques, Vincent Y. Yzerbyt, and Jacques-Philippe Leyens, "The 'Black Sheep Effect': Extremity of Judgments towards Ingroup Members as a Function of Group Identification," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 18, no. 1 (1988): 1–16; José M. Marques and Vincent Y. Yzerbyt, "The Black Sheep Effect: Judgmental Extremity towards Ingroup Members in Inter- and Intra-Group Situations," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 18, no. 3 (1988): 287–92. For a helpful summation of the technicalities of the studies see also Jose M. Marques and Dario Paez, "The 'Black Sheep Effect': Social Categorization, Rejection of Ingroup Deviates, and Perception of Group Variability," in *European Review of Social Psychology*, ed. Wolfgang Stroebe and Miles Hewstone, 5 (Chichester: Wiley, 1994), 39–46.

90 Dominic Abrams et al., "Pro-norm and Anti-norm Deviance within and between Groups," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 78, no. 5 (2000): 906.

salience than do outgroup members. The black sheep effect purports that derogation of deviants is an expression of ingroup favoritism that aims to preserve optimal group distinctiveness.⁹¹ Ingroup members are attempting to bring social differentiation and boundary clarity by way of derogation. When ingroup members self-categorize with a specific group, their identification with that group means that each individual has a vested interest in the reputation, cohesion and success of the group. This has been referred to as a “shared group-level fate.”⁹² Thus, the deviance of the individual threatens not only the group but the attribution of personal value on the part of individuals as their basis for self-categorization.⁹³ It is no wonder that strong expressions of derogation are directed toward a deviant individual when the implication of that deviance for the group and other individuals is considered.

3.3 *Key Features of Social Identity in 1 Corinthians*

Several features of a social identity approach are salient for its utilization as a social scientific framework in the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13. In his commentary on Galatians, written from a social scientific perspective using social identity theory, Esler described certain salient features of the theory for his interpretation. In his case, these were social mobility, social creativity, social competition and stereotyping.⁹⁴ A similar approach is undertaken here in regard to the modelling of social identity theory in the exegesis of 1 Corinthians. In specific, the following aspects of social identity have direct bearing on the understanding of the Corinthian context: the self-construed nature of social groupings, the processes of social comparison, the development of ingroup distinctiveness, the role of prototypicality, the variations in group permeability and the prioritization of nested identities.

91 Marques, Yzerbyt, and Leyens, “The ‘Black Sheep Effect,’” 5.

92 Marques et al., “Social Categorization, Social Identification, and Rejection of Deviant Group Members,” 405.

93 “[T]he black sheep effect emerged where the norm provided a basis for differentiating between ingroup and outgroup. This would increase the salience of the ingroup-outgroup distinction, and normative ingroup members would contribute to positive ingroup distinctiveness because they validated the ingroup norm—thus, they were positively evaluated. Counter-normative in group members decrease the subjective validity of the ingroup norm, and contributed negatively to participants’ sense of legitimate positive in group distinctiveness—thus, they were more negatively evaluated. Outgroup members were less relevant than in group members for the purpose of validating the ingroup norm—thus, they were more moderately judged than in group members were.” Marques et al., “Social Categorization, Social Identification, and Rejection of Deviant Group Members,” 409.

94 Esler, *Galatians*, 49–57.

3.3.1 Self-Constructed Categorization

Social identity perspective relates to Christ-followers in Corinth in that their social identity emerged as a result of their perceptions about themselves and the organization labelled the *ecclesia*. This social identity is simultaneously related to the individual's perception of self and how the group is defined. Self-construal of social identity suggests that the identity exists irrespective of the actual, physical expression of the *ecclesia* as a recognized social organization within Roman society. The belief in a social connection on the part of participants is adequate to comprise a recognizable social entity. Thus, by virtue of social identity theory's concept of self-construal, this book considers how Christ-followers (insiders) perceived themselves in relation to one another and how unbelievers (outsiders) appraised those who identified with the *ecclesia*.

3.3.2 Social Comparison and Ingroup Distinctiveness

Social categorization within a group is enabled through social comparison.⁹⁵ People define themselves in distinction from those outside their own grouping. Such distinctions articulate negative beliefs regarding others such that positive self-esteem might be established for ingroup members. This differentiation between the ingroup and outgroup forms the basis for boundary markers by which a person can clarify his own social identity. Various sects of Judaism had a long history of cultivating identity by virtue of ingroup distinctiveness. Paul exhorts the *ecclesia* in Corinth to posture itself similarly, often drawing comparisons between the saints of God (1 Cor. 1:2) and the unbelievers (1 Cor. 5:1, 13, 14:22–24). The negative appraisals of idol worship and pagan immorality are evidence of what social identity theorists label outgroup negativity, which serves as a tool for reinforcing ingroup identity coherence.

3.3.3 Prototypicality within Ingroups

To aid in distinguishing ingroup from outgroup, members develop a prototype. This prototype exemplifies and defines the perceived common features of a group's identity and typifies the norms. The prototype accentuates similarity among ingroup members while developing clear contrasts with outgroup(s). This individual represents the ideals of the group and may not necessarily be a typical group member. The purpose of the prototype is to maximize the contrast between the ingroup and outgroup. Since this person exemplifies group norms, individual members may seek to emulate the prototype.⁹⁶ Paul elevates

95 Tajfel, *Differentiation Between Social Groups*, 61–67.

96 Hogg, "Social Identity Theory," 118; H.H.D. Williams, "Pointing to a Prototype in Early Christian Communities: Considering Prototypical Behavior in the Letters Which Ignatius

himself as a prototypical figure through his language of *mimesis* (1 Cor. 4:16, 11:1; cf. Phil. 3:17), which conveys the notion that particular beliefs and behaviors should characterize an ingroup member.

3.3.4 Group Permeability

The degree to which a group readily accepts new members is described by its permeability. All groups are not created equal, and members of low-status groups may have the desire to move into high-status groups. Likewise, high-status groups may seek to protect group exclusivity. Social mobility is the process by which an individual moves from a low-status group to a high-status group. The Pauline conceptualization of Corinthian *ecclesia* demonstrates significant permeability. Such openness to the entry of new members should not be understood as fuzzy boundary definition. On the contrary, new ingroup members are welcomed strictly in terms of the group norms, but they are welcomed nonetheless. In the Corinthian context, Paul positions himself as one who calls unbelievers to become Christ-followers (1 Cor. 1:17, 2:1–5, 3:5, 9:19–23). The Corinthian believers are to do the same, as is evidenced in Paul's view of a believer's potential influence on a spouse who is unbelieving and children (1 Cor. 7:12–16).

3.3.5 Nested Identities, Prioritization of Salient Social Identities

The Corinthians found themselves in the complicated space of negotiating multiple identity constructions. Paul allowed for the maintenance of aspects of Roman cultural identity so long as doing so did not contradict a new in-Christ identity.⁹⁷ The Corinthians seemed bent toward social integration, although Paul's previous letter had created confusion in that regard (1 Cor. 5:9). Paul not only indicates that Christ-followers should fellowship with unbelievers, but that certain forms of accommodation are even required for the believer to have witness (1 Cor. 9:19–23). Social identity perspective, particularly social identity complexity theory,⁹⁸ acknowledges that multiple identities will be

of Antioch Wrote," in *Drawing and Transcending Boundaries in the New Testament and Early Christianity*, ed. Jacobus Kok, Martin Webber and Jermo van Nes, *Beiträge zum Verstehen der Bibel* 38 (Zürich: LIT VERLAG, 2020), 116–17.

97 Tucker, *Remain in Your Calling*, 47–48.

98 Sonia Roccas and Marilynn B. Brewer, "Social Identity Complexity," *Personality & Social Psychology Review* 6, no. 2 (2002): 88–106. Social identity complexity theory proposes that multiple identities are negotiated through intersection, dominance, compartmentalization, and merger. The helpfulness of this model for New Testament exegesis has been explored in Jacobus Kok, "Social Identity Complexity Theory as Heuristic Tool in New Testament Studies," *HTS Teologiese Studies* 70, no. 1 (2014).

salient in the self-perceptions of an individual. Paul is encouraging believers to be mindful of how they relate to both believers and unbelievers, which results in a challenging negotiation of identity.

3.3.6 Derogation as Means of Boundary Demarcation

The anomaly in need of explanation in the case of the immoral man is Paul's tolerance for immoral unbelievers (outgroup) in contrast to his derogation of the incestuous man (ingroup). The principle of ingroup favoritism within social identity theory appears to be set aside by Paul's critical appraisal of a deviant ingroup member in contrast to a quasi-favorable disposition toward outsiders. Paul asserts that his previous letter to the Corinthians had been grossly misunderstood. He states that if he had been calling for complete separation from all immorality or all immoral persons, it would be impossible to live within the world (1 Cor. 5:10). His clarification sets up a juxtaposition between 'ingroup πορνεία' and 'outgroup πορνεία' where the latter is tolerated and the former is strongly condemned. Paul's abandonment of ingroup favoritism is explained by subjective group dynamics, where a deviating individual threatens the identity clarity of the group.

3.3.7 Social Identity in Biblical Studies

This book examines 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 through the social scientific lens of a social identity approach, with particular attention to explaining the derogation of the immoral man. Such use of social identity perspective as a heuristic tool for interpretation of the New Testament is well precedented, and a few authors deserve more detailed attention here in terms of their contribution to the argument undertaken in this work.⁹⁹

99 Aside from the authors noted in the following pages, there are other noteworthy uses of identity constructs (often social identity theory) in the exegesis of 1 Corinthians. Jack Barensten addressed SRT in terms of church leadership (inclusive of the Corinthian context). Jack Barentsen, *Emerging Leadership in the Pauline Mission: A Social Identity Perspective on Local Leadership Development in Corinth and Ephesus*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 168 (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2011). Kobus Kok explored Social Identity Complexity theory as a heuristic tool for New Testament scholarship. Kok, "Social Identity Complexity Theory as Heuristic Tool in New Testament Studies," 1–9. Kok and Roth also applied social identity concepts to the way in which insider Christ-followers were sensitive toward outsiders as an expression of mission. Kok and Roth, "Sensitivity toward Outsiders and the Dynamic Relationship between Mission and Ethics/Ethos," 1–26; Kok, Jacobus and John A. Dunne, eds., *Insiders Versus Outsiders: Exploring the Dynamic Relationship Between Mission and Ethos in the New Testament*, Perspectives on Philosophy and Religious Thought (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2014), 2–14. Sin-pan Daniel Ho examined issues of Corinthian identity in community formation. Sin-pan D. Ho, *Paul*

Esler initially correlated social identity theory with the New Testament in his commentary on Galatians where he outlines in great detail how the theories put forth by Tajfel and Turner are profitably used for exegetical purposes.¹⁰⁰ He summarizes his approach as follows:

[A]n investigation of Galatians employing social-scientific research will not be reductionistic, so long as it does not seek fully to explain the theological in terms of the social but rather aims holistically to do justice to both aspects of the work's complex meaning. Offering a more sophisticated account of context may well encourage modes of enquiry which do not at their outset privilege theological questions and which, indeed, re-situate familiar textual data in possibly surprising new frameworks.¹⁰¹

Esler draws upon the dimensions of social identity theory (cognitive, evaluative and emotional) to explain the group dynamics to which Paul appeals in the letter to the Galatians. Paul seeks to develop a distinct identity for the *ecclesia* in distinction to Jewish and Gentile outgroups. He stresses the ways in which members belong to the *ecclesia* not by declaring their membership (cognitive dimension) but rather by negative valuation of the outgroups which oppose the gospel message he preached (evaluative dimension), a valuation

and the Creation of a Counter-Cultural Community: A Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Cor. 5:1–11.1 in Light of the Social Lives of the Corinthians, Library of New Testament Studies 509 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015). Kar Yong Lim utilized social identity theory and conceptual metaphor theory to analyze the social formation of Corinthian Christ-followers. Kar Y. Lim, *Metaphors and Social Identity Formation in Paul's Letters to the Corinthians* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2017). Bengt Holmberg and Mikael Winninge edited a volume which examines identity issues and numerous New Testament interpretive questions, including two chapters which address 1 Corinthians 5 specifically. Hågerland, "Rituals of (Ex-) Communication and Identity: 1 Cor 5 and 4Q266 11; 4Q270 7," 43–60; Fredrik Ivarsson, "A Man Has to Do What a Man Has to Do: Protocols of Masculine Sexual Behavior and 1 Corinthians 5–7," in Holmberg and Winninge, *Identity Formation in the New Testament*, 183–98. J. Brian Tucker and Coleman Baker have edited an invaluable handbook which addresses the Corinthians correspondence, within which Finney addresses 1 Corinthians 11 and Lim addresses 2 Corinthians 5:17. Mark Finney, "Social Identity and Conflict in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 11:17–34 in Context," in Tucker and Baker, *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, 273–88; Kar Y. Lim, "'If Anyone is in Christ, New Creation: The Old has Gone the New has Come' (2 Corinthians 5:17): New Creation and Temporal Comparison in Social Identity Formation in 2 Corinthians," in Tucker and Baker, *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, 289–310. Tucker and Kuecker have also edited a commentary, which offers important contributions to the field of social identity approaches to 1 Corinthians. Tucker, "1 Corinthians," 291–326.

100 Esler, *Galatians*, 37–57.

101 Esler, *Galatians*, 40.

which is often passionate in regard to his love of the Galatian believers and his angst regarding opponents (emotional dimension).¹⁰²

Similarly, J. Brian Tucker has proposed that social identity theory and self-categorization theory are salient in the Corinthian context by exploring how Paul encourages the continuation of Roman social identities at points where that identity does not come into conflict with an in-Christ identity. For Tucker, the intragroup conflicts addressed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1–4 “were rooted in different degrees of identification with various aspects of Roman social identity, which resulted in a misapplication of the social implications of Paul’s gospel.”¹⁰³ Tucker argues that the foundation for the Corinthian’s social identity is their calling, while the framework is God’s grace (1 Cor. 1:1–9).¹⁰⁴ Paul confronts the lack of a salient in-Christ identity in the Corinthian *ecclesia*, and he demonstrates what such an identity might look like when shaped by the wisdom and power of the gospel message in contrast to the social values of the world (1 Cor. 1:10–2:5).¹⁰⁵ The formation of an appropriate in-Christ identity was prevented by Corinthian reliance on the outgroup’s perspective, identified by Tucker as Roman imperial ideology (1 Cor. 2:6–3:4).¹⁰⁶ Paul explains the standard by which group cohesion might be realized in 1 Corinthians 3:5–23, namely that the members of the *ecclesia* identify with their leaders as people who belong to God. Through multiple metaphors, Paul revisions group belonging.¹⁰⁷ In 1 Corinthians 4:1–21, Paul reconceptualizes the role of suffering for a believer, addresses outmoded concepts regarding the client-patron system, discusses prototypes in terms of imperial ideology and instills a rhetoric of empowerment.¹⁰⁸

Tucker’s analysis suggests that the Corinthians are needing to “disentangle the adverse impact of Roman social identity.”¹⁰⁹ His work is helpful in drawing lines of correspondence between Pauline conceptualization of the *ecclesia* and the social realities which may have implicitly informed the Pauline approach. The present study endorses Tucker’s broader assertion that Corinthian Christ-followers often found themselves figuring out whether to prioritize their Roman identity or their newfound in-Christ identity. However, this work suggests that

102 Esler, *Galatians*, 42–43.

103 Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*, 38.

104 Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*, 129–51.

105 Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*, 152–80.

106 Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*, 181–209.

107 Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*, 210–34.

108 Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*, 235–67.

109 Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*, 267. May delineates his own sense of how 1 Corinthians 1–4 creates “a sense of belonging and distinction.” May, *The Body for the Lord*, 49.

in the case of the immoral man, the Corinthian Christ-followers abandoned their Roman identity (which would have rejected incest altogether) in favor of what they perceived to be an appropriate in-Christ identity (endorsement of incest as a counter-cultural phenomenon capable of bearing witness).

Alistair Scott May examined the relationship of social identity to sexual ethics in 1 Corinthians 5–7.¹¹⁰ May appraises these chapters as a unified whole, suggesting that Pauline argumentation regarding singleness in 1 Corinthians 7 ought to be read in light of the sexual ethics expressed in 1 Corinthians 5–6. He provides several arguments against prevailing notions of libertinism and asceticism within modern scholarship. While this book does not engage his rationale in rejecting the most common versions of either libertinism or asceticism, it does seek to provide a potential answer to the inconsistencies he surfaces in typical conceptualizations of libertinism.¹¹¹ Helpfully, May demonstrates that Paul makes a strong connection between avoidance of πόρνος (immorality, 1 Cor. 5:1, 9–11) and in-Christ identity. The κόσμος (world, 1 Cor. 5:10) is inherently pervaded by πόρνος. A believer might engage in the κόσμος but should never take on the ethos of that realm. By maintaining a clear sense of ingroup identity, as defined by moral purity, the believer is capable of functioning within the κόσμος without being pulled into its ethical system. Thus, the immoral man must be recategorized as an outsider so as to preserve the distinction of the *ecclesia*, for by living in πόρνος, the man has embraced the identity of the outgroup. May gives a reasoned appraisal of how 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 might be interpreted via a social identity approach. This book does not seek to reconstitute the case he has already made, though at times key components bear repeating for sake of clarity. Instead, the present study will largely assume the framework he has established in relation to the viability of a social identity

110 May, *The Body for the Lord*, 58–80.

111 “Critically Paul’s ploy assumes that πορνεία is a shaming term with which no one would wish to be associated, and that the crime cited constitutes such πορνεία. This has implications for ‘libertine’ hypotheses, which assume that the man had a Christian motivation/justification for his crime and that the community’s pride was in him. For, if the community would either fail to recognize this case as πορνεία or took some type of perverse pride in πορνεία, any attempt to falsify their pride by associating their standing with such an act would be a miserable failure.” May, *The Body for the Lord*, 66. Chapter 5 of this book seeks to explain why Paul’s shaming of the *ecclesia* might be effective in light of the honor/shame dynamic as it related to social identity for Romans. In this sense, I affirm that May was on the right track to note that simplistic notions of libertinism are inadequate; however, the answers he provides regarding libertinism are not fully adequate either.

reading of 1 Corinthians while attempting to contribute further understanding to questions which May does not undertake.¹¹²

Adam White has analyzed the matter of expulsion in Pauline practice.¹¹³ He contrasts Greek and Roman procedures for exile, noting that though they differ somewhat in form, they accomplish similar purpose of preserving harmony within the community. Expulsion from smaller affinity groups, such as the family, school or association, was thus modelled after the broader practice of exile. To this, he compares Jewish practices of expulsion where the purpose is primarily clear boundary demarcation and preservation of community purity. Paul likely had both a Roman and Jewish framework in mind when he appeals to expulsive solutions in his letters. In considering the situation in Corinth, White offers a thorough, yet concise, summary of the black sheep effect in social psychology and then demonstrates how the deviant behavior of the immoral man caused the strong response evidenced in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 (as well as 1 Thessalonians 2:4–12). He heuristically applies these situations “where expulsion is explicit”¹¹⁴ to three other situations where deviant behavior could result in expulsion even though the concept is implicit for Paul (Gal. 1:6–9; Rom. 16:17–18; Phil. 3:1–19).¹¹⁵ While scholars have discussed the black sheep effect as a social identity dynamic in the biblical text,¹¹⁶ White offers the fullest

112 See specific questions which May sets out to answer regarding the matters of identity and sexual ethics in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13. “There are various questions that shall concern us as we examine this chapter. First, we are interested in Paul’s social and theological account of the situation. How does the apostle analyse the facts reported to him? What type of social and theological remedy does this analysis generate? What, in Paul’s view, are the implications of boundary crossing for transgressor and community? Secondly, we are interested in how Paul attempts to ensure Corinthian compliance with his analysis and solution (his use of controlling language). Given that the Corinthians have taken no action against the offender, how does Paul attempt to ensure future action? How does Paul make the situation matter to the congregation? Thirdly, we are interested in what Paul’s demand for action, and the Corinthian failure to act, reveals to us about their respective understandings of Christian identity. Finally, we are interested in 5:9–13, where Paul, in the midst of the discussion of the immoral man, deals with relations with outsiders. What does this reveal to us concerning the social implications of the ethical dichotomy?” May, *The Body for the Lord*, 58.

113 White, *Paul, Community, and Discipline*, 111–231.

114 White, *Paul, Community, and Discipline*, 201.

115 White, *Paul, Community, and Discipline*, 204–12.

116 Raimo Hakola, *Reconsidering Johannine Christianity: A Social Identity Approach* (London: Routledge, 2015), 139–40. Hakola addresses the way the character of Nicodemus functions in the Johannine narrative in terms of being a deviant from Pharisaism. Aaron Kuecker, “Acts,” in Tucker and Kuecker, *T&T Clark Social Identity Commentary on the New Testament*, 221. Kuecker addresses Ananias and Sapphira as black sheep whose expulsion via death brings ingroup identity to the *ecclesia*. Paul Middleton, “Revelation,” in

assessment and application to date of which I am aware. He posits the possibility that Paul's urgency and severity relate to the threat the immoral man poses to the group entitativity in the Corinthian *ecclesia*. This book affirms the sense that the black sheep effect has heuristic value in explaining how early Christ-followers handled deviance. It also builds upon White's analysis regarding deviance and boundary maintenance by considering the integral role that honor and shame had in mediating derogation. In this sense, the black sheep effect is correlated more closely to the sociological realities of the Pauline context rather than being considered in abstraction and then recognized in the text. Additionally, White makes a foray into the capacity of the meal as celebrated by the *ecclesia* for defining the Christ-followers as a cohesive ingroup.¹¹⁷ This book will further delineate the connection between commensality as it relates to boundary formation and maintenance.

4 Sociological Models: Ethics, Honor and Ritual

This interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 primarily utilizes a social identity approach as its basis; however, three other sociological models also provide noteworthy contributions to the social scientific framework for this study: the articulation of ethics and ethos, the appropriation of honor and shame and the perpetuation of ritual. This book relies on the work of Jan G. van der Watt regarding the connection between identity, ethics and ethos. The concept of ancient honor is also important anthropologically for explaining the social motives of the immoral man, and the works of David A. deSilva and Bruce J. Malina are significant as a starting point. Lastly, the dining rituals in Corinth are important to the social identity of the *ecclesia* and are explained in light of the descriptions of Dennis Smith, Matthias Klinghardt and Hal Taussig.

Tucker and Kuecker, *T&T Clark Social Identity Commentary on the New Testament*, 591, 595. Middleton looks at the letters to the seven churches in terms of deviance expressed within these congregations. He also considers the ways in which the threat of divine violence as consequence for sin serves as an incentive away from deviant behavior and affiliation with the anti-Christ. See also Outi Lehtipuu, *Debates over the Resurrection of the Dead: Constructing Early Christian Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 67–93; Jutta Jokiranta, *Social Identity and Sectarianism in the Qumran Movement*, *Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah* 105 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 156–59.

117 White, *Paul, Community, and Discipline*, 119–21.

4.1 *Identity, Ethics and Ethos*

This study explores the interrelated components of identity, ethics and ethos. Since these terms are used in many ways in many contexts, clear definitions are of paramount importance. The edited volume by van der Watt, *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament*, draws from a wide spectrum of scholars to analyze the New Testament in light of the aforementioned categories. Within this work, definitions were agreed upon in order to facilitate consistency in the approach of varying analyses. The reader might reference these definitions, since it is these articulations of identity, ethics and ethos upon which this work relies. The definition of identity offered by van der Watt accords closely with the concept of identity within a social identity approach. He defines the concept as follows: "Identity refers to who a person or persons (community) regard themselves to be and why. A person's identity has a direct and determinative influence on what follows, namely ethics and ethos."¹¹⁸ This understanding of identity affirms three aspects of social identity theory, namely self-construal, social categorization and social comparison. By suggesting that a person regards himself or herself in a specific way, it is stated that the construal of identity is determined by the perceptions of that person. This is the case in social identity as well, where the sense of affiliation with others in a group is defined foremost by the conceptualization of the person or community related to features of perceived commonality. Furthermore, by suggesting that a person or community regards themselves to be something in distinction from something else, the concept of social categorization is implied. While not specified in van der Watt's definition of identity, the rest of the edited volume makes it clear that this 'something' is the status change in relation to Jesus. When an individual expresses faith in Christ, he experiences an identity revision which in turn affects his behavior.¹¹⁹

Both belief and behavior distinguish that person from others who have not experienced such a spiritual transformation. Through comparison, the individual can see how he differs, and boundaries are drawn which define the individual in distinction from others. Van der Watt's definition of identity leaves open the possibility that individual identity and corporate identity are both

¹¹⁸ van der Watt, *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament*, vi.

¹¹⁹ "Paul is convinced that Christians were different since they have a new identity that is reshaped by their faith. Their behaviour should reflect their new identity. Their new identity is primarily defined in terms of their new relations with God and Jesus. They are in Christ, in the Lord, and could now be called God's friends and even God's children. God's Spirit now dwells in them, making authentic Christian living possible." Jan G. van der Watt, "Again: Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament: A Few Tentative Remarks," in van der Watt, *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament*, 619.

aspects that affect ethics and ethos. Indeed, the singular reference to 'person' is qualified by van der Watt to also include, in some cases, the plurality of 'persons' (i.e., the equivalent of community). While this specific point regarding the importance of both individual and corporate identity is not refuted here by any means, the associational qualities of corporate identity are emphasized in the analysis which follows. In this sense, van der Watt's definition of identity is broader than, though not contradictory to, the conceptualization of identity within social identity theory.

Ethics are based upon identity, and they define the standards by which a community ought to function. In the words of van der Watt,

Ethics relates to the question: 'according to which rules are you and your group acting and why? This is the 'ought to' or 'should' question. It is understood as the motivated 'rules/principles/basic exhortations/ethical pointers' presented in a particular document, like 'love one another', which are based upon and related to the identity of a person.¹²⁰

Ethos applies the rules of ethics to the behavioral choices of the community. Again, van der Watt explains as follows:

Ethos relates to the question: 'how do you behave or what do you do?' This is a behavioural category. It focuses on the behaviour of a group concretely expressing the above-mentioned rules (ethics) and thus functionally displaying their identity. It indicates how the rules (ethics) are interpreted and translated into concrete action by a particular group with a particular identity within everyday situations. It deals with the way in which believers concretized their ethical convictions into actions in the totality of their life experience.¹²¹

The distinction between ethics and ethos articulated above has been adopted here, but it might be added that social identity theory enables a more nuanced consideration of how identity and ethics/ethos interrelate. In van der Watt's approach, identity is primarily determined by the spiritual transformation of belief, which results in affiliation with the *ecclesia*. It is possible that the relationship between identity, ethics and ethos is more dialogical. In social identity theory, identity is part and parcel of social categorization, meaning that the affiliation with others in a group is determined by points of perceived

120 van der Watt, *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament*, vii.

121 van der Watt, *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament*, vii.

similarity. In the case of the Corinthian *ecclesia*, these perceived points of similarity begin with belief in the risen Christ; nonetheless, the points of similarity do not end with the belief in Christ. The application of community ethics to a particular ethos within the *ecclesia* becomes a source of identity as well. Michael Wolter makes an initial advance down this path, pointing out the importance of ethos to identity:

Unter einem Ethos verstehe ich einen Kanon von institutionalisierten Handlungen, die innerhalb eines bestimmten sozialen Systems in Geltung stehen. Ihnen wird Verbindlichkeit zugeschrieben, weil allererst durch solche Handlungen eine bestimmte Gruppe als solche erkennbar und erfahrbar wird. ... In funktionaler Hinsicht geht es einem Ethos niemals lediglich um die Handlung als solche oder um deren Ziel. Handlungen, die als Ethos in Geltung stehen, weisen vielmehr immer über sich hinaus, denn ihnen kommt die Aufgabe zu, die distinkte Identität einer bestimmten Gruppe unverwechselbar darzustellen und zur Anschauung zu bringen.¹²²

In a different context, Wolter goes even further to connect an in-Christ identity with the concept of social identity:

It is of crucial importance that the commonality and the exclusivity of this identity 'in Christ', which eclipses any other ethnical, social, and cultural differences, can also be experienced as a *social* identity. For this important task, an ethos is of crucial importance, and the question is, what is the ethos alike that is able to function as identity marker and as boundary marker? The answer to this question is easy: From the very beginning onwards, it was the Christian worship or congregation of those who were baptised and believed in Jesus Christ by which their exclusive identity was exclusively objectified and experienced. It was the assembly of the Christian congregation where faith in Jesus Christ and baptism into the name of Jesus Christ, which as such are of course invisible and unrecognizable, could be experienced as social reality. Only here, the

122 [By an ethos, I understand a canon of institutionalized behaviors which are valid within a certain social system. They are held accountable because it is only through such behaviors that a certain group becomes recognizable and tangible as such. ... In functional terms, an ethos is never merely about the behaviors as such or about its goal. Rather, behaviors that are valid as ethos always point beyond themselves, because they have the task to unmistakably represent the distinct identity of a certain group and to bring it into view.] Wolter, *Theologie und Ethos im frühen Christentum*, 127–28.

early Christians could perceive that they belong together or even, that they were Christians.¹²³

Though Wolter uses the term ‘social identity’ more generally without specific reference to social identity theory, he is noting that the ethos of the *ecclesia* becomes a boundary marker. He is also acknowledging that the gathering (an aspect of ethos) of baptized believers (a ritual that created social identity) is a perceivable reality that develops this sense of identity cohesion for members.

Esler cautions against simply collapsing ethics and norms into the same category as if there is no differentiation. He also notes how norms are both a reflection of moral principles as well as an entity that has identity-forming capacity.¹²⁴ Thus, van der Watt’s construct is adequate to the task in that it acknowledges that ethics, and therefore ethos, are rooted in moral realities, yet they are socially appraised and become norms by which the group defines itself. In sum, social identity is developed not merely through common confession but also shared ethos and ethics. To be sure, the identity transformation which comes through belief dramatically determines the ethics/ethos, but the relationship is not necessarily a one-way trajectory from identity to ethos/ethic. The sense in which this book uses the term ‘identity’ also incorporates the trajectory from ethics/ethos to identity, in that conformance to group norms cultivates a sense of perceived similarity contributing to identity formation.

4.2 *Honor, Shame and Shamelessness*

Scholars have addressed the matter of honor and shame in the Mediterranean from both an anthropological and a historiographical approach, the former relying primarily on the work of Julian Pitt-Rivers and David D. Gilmore, while the latter on that of J.E. Lendon and Carlin A. Barton.¹²⁵ Malina introduced the anthropological categories of honor and shame to the field of biblical studies in a similar fashion that Esler introduced social identity theory. Malina looked to anthropologists Julian Pitt-Rivers and Pierre Bourdieu as sources for

¹²³ Wolter, “‘Let No One Seek His Own, but Each One the Other’s’ (1 Corinthians 10,24),” 202.

¹²⁴ Esler, *Galatians*, 45.

¹²⁵ Carlin A. Barton, *Roman Honor: The Fire in the Bones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 34–130; J.E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 30–106; Pitt-Rivers, “Honour and Social Status.”; Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers, *Honour and Grace in Anthropology*; David D. Gilmore, *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association, 1986).

defining and describing honor within the Mediterranean contexts.¹²⁶ Using a social scientific approach, Malina applied the concepts of honor and shame to the exegetical task, undertaking an examination of numerous accounts in the gospels and Luke-Acts.¹²⁷ David A. deSilva followed with a close examination of Hebrews and 1 Peter through the lens of honor and shame, though he dealt more thoroughly with the historical evidence in his analysis.¹²⁸ Halvor Moxnes was also an early contributor, building upon Krister Stendahl's work in Romans and arguing that honor and shame are an important feature in pivoting away from reading Romans strictly through the lens of personal conscience.¹²⁹ More recently, Jackson Wu has commented on Romans via the vantage of honor and shame.¹³⁰ Derek McNamara and Mark T. Finney have considered the role of honor and shame within the Corinthian context. McNamara analyzed honor and shame as they intersected with patronage in Corinth.¹³¹ Finney gave a reading of the entire letter of 1 Corinthians with the concept of honor and shame as a prevailing theme with some emphasis on 1 Corinthians 5:1–13.¹³² The sociological and anthropological spadework done in these studies forms a critical foundation for the analysis of honor, shame and shamelessness undertaken in this book.¹³³

126 Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," 21–77; Pierre Bourdieu, "The Sentiment of Honour in Kabyle Society," in Peristiany, *Honour and Shame*, 191–241.

127 An initial explanation of the conceptual framework can be located in Malina and Neyrey, "Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts," followed by Malina, *The New Testament World*. Also of benefit is Bruce J. Malina, *Windows on the World of Jesus: Time Travel to Ancient Judea* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993).

128 deSilva, "Paul, Honor, and Shame," 26–47; deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 23–94; deSilva, *Despising Shame*; deSilva, *The Hope of Glory*, 118–43.

129 Halvor Moxnes, "Honour and Righteousness in Romans," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 10, no. 32 (1988): 77. Note that Moxnes correlates the justification language of Romans and the wisdom language of 1 Corinthians to the honor-shame framework.

130 Jackson Wu, *Reading Romans with Eastern Eyes: Honor and Shame in Paul's Message and Mission* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019).

131 Derek M. McNamara, "The Rhetoric of Honor and Shame in 1 Corinthians" (PhD, University of South Africa, 2008); Derek M. McNamara, "Shame the Incestuous Man: 1 Corinthians 5," *Neotestamentica* 44, no. 2 (2010): 307–26.

132 Finney, *Honour and Conflict in the Ancient World*, 110–120. It should be noted that Finney contends that Malina's social scientific modelling potentially imposes incorrect nuances upon the text, and Finney opts instead for a socio-historic approach to honor in first-century AD Roman contexts.

133 Numerous other scholars have added to a corpus of literature related to honor and shame in the New Testament, including the following notable contributions: Philip F. Esler, *First Christians in Their Social Worlds: Social-scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 1994), 25–29; John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina, eds., *Handbook of Biblical Social Values* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009). See also

4.3 *Ritual Theory*

Catherine Bell reworked the notion of ritual by advocating that it is an embodied experience. In her estimation, ritual was the acting out of belief and was thoroughly contextualized such that there is no distance between belief and ritual. As she notes in the introduction to *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, it is preferable that “so-called ritual activities be removed from their isolated position as special paradigmatic acts and restored to the context of social activity in general.”¹³⁴ Bell’s work interacted with that of J.Z. Smith,¹³⁵ Pierre Bourdieu,¹³⁶ Victor Turner¹³⁷ and Mary Douglas.¹³⁸ The net effect of the past half-century of scholarship in ritual theory is that ritual has been embedded within the social milieu. Since this book considers social identity within a specific social context, this aspect of ritual theory becomes relevant. Chapter 2 offers some examination of baptism as an introductory rite into the *ecclesia*. Chapter 6 considers the role that Eucharistic ritual has in creating an ingroup identity for Christ-followers. In fact, the connection that Bell makes between social reality and ritual is critical to understanding how Paul conceives of the Eucharist within the situation of the immoral man. It is upon this foundation that the Pauline prohibition against eating with the immoral man will be examined. Hal Taussig has mapped the New Testament scholarship regarding Hellenistic meals,¹³⁹ inclusive of the work of Dennis Smith,¹⁴⁰ Andrew

sources offering critical appraisal of the tendency of New Testament scholars to universalize anthropological principles regarding honor and shame, applying them without the nuance of specific contexts: F.G. Downing, “‘Honor’ among Exegetes,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 61 (1999); John K. Chance, “The Anthropology of Honor and Shame: Culture, Values and Practice,” in *Honor and Shame in the World of the Bible*, ed. Victor H. Matthews et al., *Semeia* 68 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1996); Pilch and Malina, *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, 89–96.

¹³⁴ Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 7.

¹³⁵ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1990).

¹³⁶ Pierre Bourdieu and Richard Nice, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology 16 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

¹³⁷ Turner, *The Ritual Process*.

¹³⁸ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Mary Douglas, “Deciphering a Meal,” *Daedalus* 101, no. 1 (Winter 1972): 61–81.

¹³⁹ Hal Taussig, *In the Beginning was the Meal: Social Experimentation and Early Christian Identity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 55–85.

¹⁴⁰ Dennis E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

McGowan¹⁴¹ and Matthias Klinghardt,¹⁴² to the aforementioned literature regarding ritual theory.¹⁴³ His social scientific model connects the disparate, yet complementary, components of ritual theory and scholarship regarding the Hellenistic meal. Given the thoroughness of Taussig's work in particular on the connection between commensality and ritual, it need not be summarized here.

5 Critical Suppositions

This work assumes Pauline authorship of a rhetorically cohesive letter to the Corinthians, one which was embedded in an actual relationship between the apostle and new believers in Corinth. Paul is strategic and intentional in his choice of words, and his instruction regarding the immoral man is connected to his broader argument. Here is a brief summary of the key exegetical decisions and suppositions which inform the subsequent social scientific interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13.

5.1 *Authorship and Dating*

The Pauline authorship of 1 Corinthians is not necessarily disputed,¹⁴⁴ and the following analysis will operate under the assumption that Paul wrote this letter. Moreover, as will be demonstrated further along, it will also be assumed

141 Andrew McGowan, "The Myth of the 'Lord's Supper': Paul's Eucharistic Meal Terminology and Its Ancient Reception," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (2015).

142 Matthias Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft: Soziologie und Liturgie frühchristlicher Mahlfeiern*, Texte und Arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen Zeitalter 13 (Tübingen: Francke, 1996); Klinghardt and Taussig, *Mahl und religiöse Identität im frühen Christentum*.

143 Note Smit's label of the "Smith-Klinghardt'-paradigm in the study of early Christian meals." Peter-Ben Smit, *Felix Culpa: Ritual Failure and Theological Innovation in Early Christianity*, Novum Testamentum Supplements 185 (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 68.

144 Paul Gardner, *1 Corinthians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 18; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 71–72. It should be noted that a certain Sosthenes is included in the salutation (1 Cor. 1:1), which may be the same individual referenced in the Lukan narrative of Paul's trial before Gallio (Acts 18:17). He could have served as an amanuensis for Paul, since the letter notes that the final portion was written specifically in Paul's own handwriting (1 Cor. 16:21–24). Sosthenes could merely have been working alongside Paul in Ephesus at the time the letter was written, and Paul might have felt that this fact was significant. He may have been the individual entrusted with conveying the letter to Corinth. The specific nature of Sosthenes' role does not diminish the personal nature of the letter from Paul to the Corinthians.

that the composition is cohesive in nature. The dating of 1 Corinthians is discerned by considering the details of the Pauline visit to Corinth in the Lukan narrative of Acts. There we find a description of Paul's eighteen-month sojourn in Corinth (Acts 18:11), at the end of which the Jews brought him before the Roman proconsul Gallio (Acts 18:12–17). The Delphi Inscription is a letter from the emperor Claudius to the Delphians, in which he references Lucius Junius Gallio as proconsul. The letter is internally dated as following the twenty-sixth acclamation of Claudius as emperor. While a firm date of that acclamation is not attested, a general range of time can be discerned. The twenty-seventh acclamation likely took place in the late summer of AD 52. Because acclamations related to military victories and battles were fought in a particular season, the twenty-sixth acclamation was likely early in the military season of AD 52.¹⁴⁵ This would then place his proconsulship in AD 50–51 or AD 51–52. Proconsulships initiated in the summer of each year, usually in July.¹⁴⁶ Gallio vacated his proconsulship early, according to his brother Seneca, and the latest date that he could have sailed without risking the treacherous waters of winter months would have been September.¹⁴⁷ It is therefore likely that Paul's trial before Gallio was in the late summer or early fall of AD 51, after which the apostle left for Jerusalem.¹⁴⁸ The letter of 1 Corinthians makes clear that Paul wrote from Ephesus (1 Cor. 16:8). Once again, we reference the Lukan narrative which recounts a Pauline sojourn in Ephesus for three years (Acts 20:31; cf. 19:8–10). The first letter to the Corinthians was written somewhere in the span of AD 53–56. There is a distinct possibility that the letter was written closer to the earlier portion of his time in Ephesus since he mentioned at least a year passing (2 Cor. 8:10, 9:2) from the beginning of the collection in Corinth (1 Cor. 16:1–4) until just before he leaves Ephesus.

5.2 *Argument of 1 Corinthians*

The letter of 1 Corinthians follows the trajectory of three vices: disunity, immorality and idolatry. Paul confronts the Corinthian sinfulness in regard to each

145 Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 16–18.

146 Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2002), 164–65.

147 Sen., *Ep.* 104.1–2. “illud mihi ore erat domini mei Gallionis, qui cum in Achaia febrem habere coepisset, protinus navem ascendit clamitans non corporis esse, sed loci morbum.” Seneca, *Epistles, Volume III: Epistles 93–124*, trans. Richard M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library 77 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), 191. “[F]or I remembered my master Gallio's words, when he began to develop a fever in Achaia and took ship at once, insisting that the disease was not of the body but of the place.”

148 Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul*, 18–22.

vice; however, he also provides a positive vision of what obedience might look like in these domains.¹⁴⁹ The vices of disunity, immorality and idolatry were not isolated to individual violators, but rather endemic to the *ecclesia* as a whole. Moreover, disunity, immorality and idolatry were not theoretical possibilities against which Paul warned preemptively. These vices were surfacing in specific circumstances, some of which were quite complicated to sort out. The letter is not necessarily composed of a series of Pauline responses to itemized questions (although Paul is clearly interacting with the Corinthians on specific matters).¹⁵⁰ Rather, Paul demonstrates a good sense of what was happening in Corinth, and he pastorally confronts their shortcomings while setting a constructive tone for what obedience might look like. He accomplishes this pastoral confrontation through trajectories that deal with the three vices in various ways throughout the letter.

Paul first confronts disunity, expressed in sectarianism within the *ecclesia* (1 Cor. 1:10–17). Paul accomplishes the constructive vision of unity in the analogy to the body (1 Cor. 12:1–31) by exhorting that the outcome of unity is mutual edification. Paul contrasts the *σάρκινος* (fleshly, 1 Cor. 3:1)¹⁵¹ with the *πνευματικός* (spiritual, 1 Cor. 3:1), a theme which is repeated in the admonition regarding

149 Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 21–25. I was first introduced by Ciampa and Rosner to the idea that Paul deals with immorality and idolatry in Corinth as the primary vices of the community, and that he addresses each vice from both a negative and a positive standpoint within the letter. I have developed their suggestion further here with a few key alterations: 1) I have included disunity as a third vice confronted by Paul. I do so on the basis of Margaret M. Mitchell's documentation of the themes of factionalism and reconciliation throughout, followed by her development of the *topos* of Paul's urgent call for concord. See Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 65–294. 2) I have subsumed Ciampa and Rosner's discussion of greed in relation to the lawsuit of 1 Corinthians 6:1–11 under the topic of disunity. They suggest that greed is "a third member of the unholy triad of vices that rightly condemns the heathen." Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 24. This is not denied, but since the topic is treated less extensively in the letter, it seems best to categorize it as an expression of disunity, a category which Ciampa and Rosner did not allow themselves to work with in the same way as immorality and idolatry. 3) I have proposed that Paul is not very linear in his approach to these vices, but rather that he approached the topics in overlapping, concentric circles. The themes are interrelated and often dealt with together as Paul gives admonition and advice on a diverse set of circumstances within the Corinthian *ecclesia*.

150 Chloe's people have informed Paul regarding disagreements (1 Cor. 1:11). A letter has been written to Paul about specific questions, presumably marriage and asceticism at the least, although Paul's subsequent discussions of meat sacrificed to idols might also be in response to the same inquiry (1 Cor. 7:1). Paul has also been visited by Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus (1 Cor. 16:17), who undoubtedly brought him news or the letter or both.

151 Translations of biblical texts are from NASB95 throughout unless otherwise noted.

the immoral man whose expulsion would cause the destruction of the flesh and the salvation of the spirit (1 Cor. 5:5). For Paul, true unity is a Spirit-driven reality. Gifts are *ἐκάστῳ δὲ δίδοται* (each one is given, 1 Cor. 12:7) for the good of the whole *πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον* (for the common good, 1 Cor. 12:7). Ultimately, when exercised in love (1 Cor. 13:1–13), the prophetic gifts (1 Cor. 14:1) bring *οἰκοδομὴν καὶ παράκλησιν καὶ παραμυθίαν* (edification and exhortation and consolation, 1 Cor. 14:3). When each person functions according to his or her designated role, unity is achieved. This is true in regard to the gifts of the Spirit, but also in terms of gender (1 Cor. 11:1–16).

The lack of unity is also evident in the way the Lord's Supper is being commemorated (1 Cor. 11:17–34). This is especially significant in that the ritual commemorates the basis of salvation in the redemption of Christ on the cross. Paul traces a line from the foolishness of the cross (1 Cor. 1:18–2:16) to the power of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1–58). Paul determines *οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινά τι εἰδέναι ἐν ὑμῖν εἰ μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον* (to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 2:2) and refers to this as *τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν* (the gospel which I preached to you, 1 Cor. 15:1). The gospel itself becomes the unifying reality within the *ecclesia*. The ordered presentation of the manifestation of the Spirit becomes a witness to the gospel in and of itself as outsiders join the congregational worship (1 Cor. 14:23). When believers publicly exhibit disunity, the opposite of effective witness is present (1 Cor. 6:1–11). Paul calls the *ecclesia* away from factious discord, in all its expressions, toward unified worship of Jesus Christ as Savior.

Secondly, Paul calls out the immorality present in the *ecclesia*. Obviously, one of the prominent expressions of immorality in Corinth is that of the incestuous man (1 Cor. 5:1–13). Paul also deals with immorality as it relates to the Corinthians who frequented (or were potentially tempted to frequent) prostitutes within the city (1 Cor. 6:11–20). He condemns *μοιχοὶ* (adulterers, 1 Cor. 6:9), and argues that intimacy with a prostitute is a misuse of the mystical union (1 Cor. 6:16) created by that intimacy—a union which is emblemized in the relationship a person has with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17). Constructively, Paul suggests that a believer may direct his relational desires toward the Lord, allowing his body to be a temple of the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). Illicit sexual desires can also be assuaged through intimacy within monogamous marriage relationships (1 Cor. 7:2). Instead of demonstrating an adulterous lack of self-control, one can display continence and faithfulness within a covenant relationship (1 Cor. 7:1–9). Human sexuality then serves as an expression of spiritual unity rather than an act of disloyalty to deity. Paul references this disloyalty in the immorality of the Israelites during the wilderness wanderings (1 Cor. 10:5–10), but then he goes on to establish the reality of God's grace to endure all

temptation victoriously (1 Cor. 10:13). As with the previously discussed display of Spirit-filled unity within the *ecclesia*, sexual morality can serve as a witness to unbelievers, even within the confines of a household (1 Cor. 7:10–16).

Thirdly, Paul addresses the matter of idolatry, again with a confrontation and a call to obedience. This issue of idolatry proved to be complicated for the Corinthians, as it was unclear what behavior constituted worship of idols (1 Cor. 8:4–6). Simultaneously, it also needed clarifying how differing perceptions of meat sacrificed to idols should be handled (1 Cor. 8:7–13). The immorality which Paul confronts (1 Cor. 10:1–13) is closely connected to idolatry, which Paul says that the Corinthians should flee from (1 Cor. 10:14; cf. Paul's exhortation to flee immorality, 1 Cor. 6:18). Faith in Christ is in vain if it is not rooted in the glorious truth of a living God and resurrected Savior (1 Cor. 15:14), which is contrasted with the muteness of idols (1 Cor. 12:2). Paul provides a constructive means for avoiding idolatry in two ways. For one, the *ecclesia* can set aside personal freedoms in service of the weaker brother (1 Cor. 9:1–18). This avoids tempting any believer to commit idolatry against his conscience. For two, the Eucharist can be celebrated in contrast to the idolatrous worship (1 Cor. 10:19–22).¹⁵² Undoubtedly, Paul had Roman feasts in mind, similar to the sympotic meal where the Lord's Supper was commemorated, where other deities were lauded by the libation phase of the meal.

It should be carefully noted that the obedience to truth in relation to the temptations of disunity, immorality and idolatry has the effect of witness to outsiders in each case. When believers take other believers to court or when confusion ensues in the worship service (each an expression of disunity), witness is abrogated (1 Cor. 6:5–6, 14:23–24). However, when the opposite occurs, the good news of the gospel (1 Cor. 1:17, 9:16–18, 15:1) is made evident. Likewise, when Christ-followers live in moral purity, they model a mystical union with Christ by virtue of their chastity (1 Cor. 6:17) and challenge unbelieving spouses to become Christ-followers (1 Cor. 7:16). The same principle is at work with the setting aside of idolatry. Concern for those weakened by idolatry leads to effective witness (1 Cor. 9:19–23). Thus, it might be said that Paul addresses the temptations of disunity, immorality and idolatry in overlapping and interrelated ways in the letter as he seeks to assist the Corinthians in navigating very

¹⁵² Xavier Léon-Dufour, *Sharing the Eucharistic Bread: The Witness of the New Testament* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 15–16. The use of the term Eucharist to describe the performative aspects of the ritual is not present until the second century. The earlier expression, and that which is used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:20, is the 'Lord's Supper' (κυριακὸς δεῖπνος). Nevertheless, the two expressions will be used interchangeably throughout as a description of the performative ritual begun by Jesus and perpetuated by Christ-followers in varying contexts around the Roman Empire.

specific situations in the life of the *ecclesia*. He shows concern throughout for how disobedience obfuscates witness, and likewise he casts vision for the possibility of constructive witness by virtue of obedience. The rhetorical trajectory of the letter is intended to help the Corinthians evaluate how their personal choices affect the mission of the *ecclesia* to serve as witness to outsiders.

Since the concept of witness is so closely linked to the trajectory of disunity, immorality and idolatry within the letter, a nuanced definition is warranted. The Pauline reference to witness is encapsulated in the terms μαρτύριον (testimony, 1 Cor. 1:6, 2:1) and κήρυγμα (proclamation, 1 Cor. 1:21, 2:4, 15:14). When Christ-followers convey the events of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, they offer a testimony. Of course, these biographical realities are more than recollection of mere events. They convey the essence of the gospel—that Jesus died for our sins, was buried and raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:3–4). Paul is careful to connect himself as an eyewitness of the resurrection of Jesus and a purveyor of the gospel via personal testimony. The apostle παρέλαβον (received, 1 Cor. 15:3) the gospel, and he also offers it to the Corinthians on the basis of his own encounter with Christ, which he carefully references in 1 Corinthians 15:8–9. Paul refers to the personal impact of his encounter with Christ is his own testimony by saying χάριτι δὲ θεοῦ εἰμι ὃ εἰμι (but by the grace of God I am what I am, 1 Cor. 15:10). Subsequent generations of believers also engage in this twofold expression of testimony. They share the firsthand account of Christ offered to them by the original witnesses, along with an affirmation of the validity of this account. The claim that a man was raised from the dead and can offer salvation is incredulously bold and unconventional, but the testimony of believers affirms these events as a consequential reality on the basis of apostolic testimony. Subsequent generation believers also recount the transformative experience eventuated by their own personal belief in the testimony handed down from the original eye witnesses. In this way, the Christ-follower gives evidence of the account itself and secondarily validates it by virtue of personal experience.

Witness is not merely testimony, however. The willingness of the Christ-follower to proclaim that testimony to others is an additional component. Such outward conveyance is implied in the term κήρυγμα (message, 1 Cor. 1:21, 2:4, 15:14), but it is also emphasized verbally in μαρτυρέω (give testimony [own translation], 1 Cor. 15:15), κηρύσσω (preach, 1 Cor. 1:23, 9:27, 15:11–12), λαλέω (speak, 1 Cor. 2:6–7, 13; 3:1; 9:8; 13:1), καταγγέλλω (proclaim broadly and compellingly [own translation], 1 Cor. 2:1, 9:14, 11:26) and εὐαγγελίζω (proclaim good news [own translation], 1 Cor. 1:17, 9:16–18, 15:1–2). This panoply of terms is rich with meaning, but each emphasizes the announcement of the gospel. Paul makes the connection quite explicit in 2 Corinthians 4:13: Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ

ἐλάλησα, καὶ ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ καὶ λαλοῦμεν ("I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore we also speak). This is even clearer in Paul's language of ambassadorship in 2 Corinthians 5:18–20. There Paul explains that the reconciliation he experienced resulted in the stewardship of proclamation, with the intended result of reconciliation to God by the hearers. While Paul almost always casts this stewardship of the gospel witness in terms of his own apostolic responsibilities, it would be incorrect to assume that he does not conceive that subsequent generations of believers would carry on the same witness. After affirming the power of the resurrection and the essentiality of faith, Paul commissions the Corinthian believers. They are also workers in the kingdom: "Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί, ἐδραῖοι γίνεσθε, ἀμετακίνητοι, περισσεύοντες ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ τοῦ κυρίου πάντοτε, εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ κόπος ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔστιν κενὸς ἐν κυρίῳ (Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15:58).¹⁵³

The focus of witness (μαρτύριον and κήρυγμα) is the εὐαγγέλιον (gospel, 1 Cor. 4:15; 9:12, 14, 18, 23; 15:1). The good news of salvation is equated with the crucifixion (resulting in the atonement of sins, cf. 1 Cor. 15:3, 17) and the resurrection (resulting in victory over death, cf. 1 Cor. 15:50–57). The response to the gospel is faith (1 Cor. 2:5, 15:14, 17). As Paul notes, οὕτως κηρύσσομεν καὶ οὕτως ἐπιστεύσατε (so we preach and so you believed, 1 Cor. 15:11). Yet, the response of faith is brought about not merely through convincing proofs of the resurrection but also through the example of personal transformation in the life of a Christ-follower who gives testimony. In describing the process of bringing the Corinthians to faith, Paul calls them his beloved children (1 Cor. 4:14). He exhorts them to imitate him (1 Cor. 4:16). His teaching is important (cf. 1 Cor. 4:17), but equally so is the way in which his life models the power of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 4:20). It is ever so important to have Paul's understanding of the means by which witness is accomplished in mind as a background to his exhortations in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13. It is no accident that he lays out the equal importance of the factuality of the resurrection and the powerful effect of personal transformation on witness in 1 Corinthians 4:14–21. The resurrection is a complicated concept to be grasped (cf. Acts 17:32) and its truthfulness must not be muddled by the anomalous lifestyles of believers. The reputational testimony and the content of the gospel are carefully woven together as essential

153 For a fuller documentation of Paul's expectation of witness on the part of the Corinthian church, see Robert L. Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early Christian Communities to Evangelize?* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 81–105.

components of the witness of the *ecclesia*. The report regarding the incestuous man is a matter which must be dealt with as a result of Paul's own apostolic calling to train his spiritual children in the ministry of reconciliation.

For Paul, faith was not a privatized experience but rather a public proclamation via affiliations which were observable by others. By countering the behaviors associated with the sins of disunity, immorality and idolatry, Paul hopes that the *ecclesia* will offer effective witness. Paul notes the ironic fact that the Christ-followers have unified around the immoral man (1 Cor. 5:2), inappropriately focusing the virtue of unity on the wrong locus. He calls for the Spirit's unifying transformation, alluding to the Spirit's presence in his own mediated presence with the Corinthians (1 Cor. 5:3–4). The result would be a unified expression in the expulsion of the man (1 Cor. 5:2, 5, 13) so that the spirit of the man might be saved (1 Cor. 5:5). The modality of enforcement is found in disassociating from the man (1 Cor. 5:11). Paul lists other types of sins besides πόρνος (immorality, 1 Cor. 5:1, 9–11) which might also necessitate disassociation. Notably, included in this list are εἰδωλολάτρης (idolater, 1 Cor. 5:10–11) and ἄρπαξ (swindler, 1 Cor. 5:10–11). Anthony C. Thiselton notes the verb ἄρπάζω means to “snatch something and carry it off as one's own.”¹⁵⁴ Paul is likely referring to a financial practice that takes advantage of another, perhaps even anticipating his comments that immediately follow regarding the lawsuit (1 Cor. 6:1–11). Nevertheless, the nuance of this term is rooted in disunity, in that an ἄρπαξ is only successful when robbing another of something which is his due. It may be that the agonistic striving for honor in Corinth is also in mind here and is reflected in the factions which have eventuated in the *ecclesia*. The point is that we find a convergence of the thematic sins of disunity, immorality and idolatry within Paul's confrontation in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13. This rhetorical analysis of the letter lends credence to the necessity of discovering the implication of the incestuous situation for the witness of the *ecclesia*.

5.3 *Textual Criticism*

Three textual variants in this pericope warrant attention for the ways in which they affect the interpretation of Paul's words. While there are numerous other variant readings, others do not have a significant influence on the interpretive process as it relates to this study.

¹⁵⁴ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 411.

Verse	NA28	Alternate reading
5:1	ἐθνεσιν	ἐθνεσιν ὀνομάζεται
	ℙ⁴⁶ Ⲑ* A B C D F G 6. 33. 81. 1175. 1739 lat co	ℙ⁶⁸ Ⲑ² L P Ψ 104. 365. 630. 1241. 1505. 1881. 2464 ℳ vg^{mss} sy
5:12b	οὐχὶ τοὺς ἔσω ὑμεῖς κρίνετε	τοὺς ἔσωθεν ὑμεῖς κρίνατε
	Ⲑ A B C F G P 6. 33. 81. 104. 630. 1175. 1505. 1739. 1881. latt	ℙ ⁴⁶ sy ^p
5:13	κρίνει	κρίνει
	D ² L Ψ 629. 1241. 2464.	ℙ ⁴⁶ Ⲑ A B* C D* F G P

The earliest addition of ὀνομάζεται to the text is attested in the seventh century (ℙ⁶⁸), and it could be explained by the use of the phrase ἀδελφὸς ὀνομαζόμενος (1 Cor. 5:11) later in the passage or the usage in Ephesians 5:3, Πορνεία ... μηδὲ ὀνομαζέσθω. The absence of ὀνομάζεται in all earlier manuscripts would indicate the probability that it is not an original reading. The significance of this variant in the case of this argument is the way in which it describes Gentile perception of incest. The idea that it would not even be named would indicate either that there were no incidents of incest among Gentiles or that it was not spoken of by Gentiles. Neither is the case in actuality, and the best rendering of the text supports this.¹⁵⁵

A second issue relates to the elimination of the term οὐχὶ, which transforms the clause from a question to an imperative. With the inclusion of οὐχὶ, the question is a rhetorical one that anticipates a positive response from the audience. In the alternate reading, Paul would be giving further instruction, just as he has done earlier in the pericope. There is a difference in tone but not necessarily in meaning. Even though the evidence for omission of οὐχὶ is early (ℙ⁴⁶), the inclusion of οὐχὶ, is very well attested.¹⁵⁶ Paul is consistent in using ἔξω and ἔσω with the definite article; however, he always uses ἔξωθεν and ἔσωθεν without the article in his epistles, apart from this variant. It is, therefore, an

155 Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 272; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 198; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 385.

156 Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 292; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 415.

anomaly that $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$ maintains τοὺς ἔξω (1 Cor. 5:12a) but alters the latter part of the verse to read τοὺς ἔσωθεν (1 Cor. 5:12b).¹⁵⁷

The final variant regards the decision of whether to read κρινεῖ (future indicative) or κρίνει (present indicative) in 1 Corinthians 5:13. Without accents in the original, the determination must be made contextually. The future is preferred, along with Nestle-Aland 28, in light of the future uses of the same verbal form in 1 Corinthians 6:2–3. Paul is looking ahead eschatologically to a future judgment, and the same judgment is likely in mind in 1 Corinthians 5:13.¹⁵⁸ The idea of a future judgment for outsiders and a current judgment for insiders also accords well with the sense of the pericope. Paul states that believers cannot be concerned with the waywardness of unbelievers. The tension created by deferred judgment of outsiders may not be resolved immediately, but he suggests that believers simply need to wait in faith for God to do what is just in this case. In the meantime, believers serve as a testimony of God's grace, with the hope that ultimate judgment will not need to be brought against such persons in the future.

5.4 Lexical Analysis

The passage in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 begins with a present passive third person singular indicative form of ἀκούω. The effect of this verb is to emphasize the dissemination of information broadly (cf. 1 Cor. 11:18 where the first person singular of ἀκούω is used by Paul regarding news about factions in the *ecclesia*).¹⁵⁹ The subject of this third person verb is πορνεία. Paul places the subject of the verb at the end of the clause so that he can offer a qualification regarding the subject. The πορνεία which is reported is τοιαύτη πορνεία ἣτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, 1 Cor. 5:1). The net effect of Paul's word order is that the emphasis is placed on the knowledge of and the disapproval of the πορνεία, even before the fact is clarified that incest is the specific manifestation of the πορνεία in Corinth. The term Ὀλως can mean either actually or everywhere. In light of the placement in this sentence, it is best to understand this term as bringing an intensifying

157 Jeffrey J. Kloha, "A Textual Commentary on Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians" (PhD, University of Leeds, 2006), 104.

158 Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 415; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 220.

159 May, *The Body for the Lord*, 60–61. May provides a detailed exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13, interspersed with social identity analysis, integrating his social identity approach with his exegetical observations (see pages 60–80). His exegetical analysis may be referenced as a helpful resource. In this book, I have more extensively developed the social identity analysis of the passage.

effect as an adverb modifying the main verb ἀκούεται. The phrase γυναῖκά ... τοῦ πατρὸς echoes the LXX in Leviticus 18:7–8. Paul could have used the term μητρὶα for stepmother, but he opts for a clear reference to the Mosaic Law instead, thereby alluding to the divine standard regarding incest. Thus, within the first sentence of this pericope, Paul has lexically emphasized the ways in which this sin has become widely known, followed by a clarification that the sin is condemned by both Gentile and Jewish standards.

Next, he turns to the Corinthian congregation, characterizing them as πεφυσιωμένοι (arrogant, 1 Cor. 5:2). Here Paul makes a connection with his previous points in the letter. Earlier, Paul has suggested that avoiding arrogance will prevent sectarianism (1 Cor. 4:6, from the verb φυσίω). In contrast, embracing arrogance has caused the Corinthians to eschew accountability for their sin (1 Cor. 4:18, also from φυσιόω). Paul could be speaking generally, or he may be referring to the incestuous situation that he is about to expound upon in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13. The characterization of arrogance with the participle πεφυσιωμένοι is followed by a past tense negated verb: the Corinthians have not mourned the sin (ἐπενθήσατε, 1 Cor. 5:2) with the result that (ἵνα clause) the man has been removed from the community. Paul follows the very same linguistic pattern of a participle followed by a past tense verb and a ἵνα clause in describing himself in contrast to the Corinthians:

	Corinthians	Paul
participial descriptor	ὕμεις πεφυσιωμένοι ἐστέ (5:2)	ἀπὼν τῷ σώματι παρὼν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι (5:3)
past tense verb	οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἐπενθήσατε (5:2)	κέκρικα ... τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον (5:3)
ἵνα clause	ἵνα ἀρθῇ ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν ὁ τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο πράξας (5:2)	ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου (5:5)

Paul's earlier reference to arrogance in 1 Corinthians 4:18 suggests that their arrogance derives from a sense that Paul would not be present with them. Such causation for their arrogance should be read into Paul's description of the Corinthians as arrogant in 1 Corinthians 5:2. Paul's absence creates the arrogance, so now he counters this with his presence (παρὼν, 1 Cor. 5:3). Paul's spiritual presence with the *ecclesia* holds them accountable to the standards of right conduct. This accountability applies to the incestuous man as well as the congregation in their acceptance of his behavior.

Paul suggests a connection between repentance of sin and judgment by his use of the verbs *πενθέω* and *κρίνω*. If the Corinthians had mourned the sin of the immoral man, this would have indicated that they appropriately judged the sin. As it was, Paul needed to judge the sin on their behalf due to their recalcitrance. For Paul, judgment follows sorrow over sin. There is no delight in the castigation, even if Paul is confident that it is necessary. If the Corinthians had mourned the sin of the incestuous man, the result would have been removal of the man, the hypothetical possibility of the removal being conveyed via the subjunctive mood. In contrast to the Corinthians, Paul does mourn and judge. Again the outcome is communicated in the subjunctive mood, this time not because Paul's action is hypothetical but because the repentance of the immoral man is only a possibility. The man must repent so that his salvation could be realized.

A single, complex sentence is found in 1 Corinthians 5:3–5 where the main verb of the sentence is *κέκρικα*, which is made emphatic by the addition of the first person pronoun *Ἐγώ*. The object of the verb is *τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον* (one who had done this deed, 1 Cor. 5:3). This much is clear: Paul has judged the incestuous man. Beyond this, one must make informed interpretive choices regarding modification. I have taken the phrase *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ* (in the name of our Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. 5:4) to modify the participle immediately preceding it (*κατεργασάμενον*). This would imply that the man acted with some measure of theological justification for his incest.¹⁶⁰ I have taken the phrase *συναχθέντων ὑμῶν καὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ πνεύματος* (when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, 1 Cor. 5:4) as a genitive absolute which indicates the manner of the judgment's actualization. This phrase also serves the function of demonstrating that the congregation as a whole must stand in agreement with Paul on the matter of expulsion. Paul acts authoritatively from a distance, but he does not act alone. The prepositional phrase *σὺν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ* (with the power of our Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. 5:4) modifies the genitive absolute.

The infinitival form *παραδοῦναι* (deliver, 1 Cor. 5:5) is commonly interpreted as an imperatival infinitive;¹⁶¹ nevertheless, such a form is rare in the New Testament.¹⁶² It seems more natural to see the infinitive as the complement of

160 There are at least three other options for modification in regard to this phrase. I am arguing that it should be taken to modify the participle to which it is closest. This particular interpretation factors substantially into the argument of chapter 5, thus I will not lay out complete rationale for this exegetical choice here. For full explanation, see chapter 5.

161 Raymond F. Collins and Daniel J. Harrington, *First Corinthians*, Sacra Pagina Series 7 (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 1999), 212.

162 Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 608; James L. Boyer, "The Classification of

κέκρια. Taking κέκρια (I have judged, 1 Cor. 5:3) as the primary verb rather than παραδοῦναι in an imperatival force has the effect of emphasizing the evaluation which Paul makes toward the immoral man over and above the handing over of the man. Because the main verb is supplemented with so many other verbal forms (multiple participles used in an adverbial sense, infinitive, subjunctive in ἵνα clause), this sentence is best rendered in English as two sentences with κέκρια supplied again in the second: “Therefore on my part, being absent in body but present in spirit, I have already evaluated (as present) the one who did these things in the name of the name of our Lord Jesus. When you (and also my spirit) gather together with the power of our Lord Jesus, [I have determined, κέκρια] to hand over such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord” ([own translation], 1 Cor. 5:3–5). The handing over is a means to the greater end of judging or classifying the immoral man according to his correct categorization, which is unbeliever and outsider.¹⁶³

In verse 6, Paul makes a familiar pivot in his argumentation. Having condemned the immoral man for the second time (first in 1 Cor. 5:1 by noting gentile disapproval of incest and second in 1 Cor. 5:3–5 by judging and turning over the man), Paul once again rebukes the congregation for their toleration: Οὐ καλὸν τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν (Your boasting is not good, 1 Cor. 5:6). The imperative ἐκκαθάρατε (clean out, 1 Cor. 5:7) is used metaphorically to reiterate the necessity of removing the man from the *ecclesia*. The analogy of ζύμη (leaven, 1 Cor. 5:6) and φύραμα (lump, 1 Cor. 5:6) follows in the context of πάσχα (Passover, 1 Cor. 5:7). The repetitive pattern of the pericope might be observed as follows:

Condemn the immoral man (A)	“Ὅλως ἀκούεται ἐν ὑμῖν πορνεία, καὶ τοιαύτη πορνεία ἥτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ὥστε γυναῖκά τινα τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχειν. (5:1)
Confront the congregation (B)	καὶ ὑμεῖς πεφυσισμένοι ἐστέ, καὶ οὐχὶ μάλλον ἐπενθήσατε, ἵνα ἀρθῇ ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν ὁ τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο πράξας; (5:2)
Cast out the immoral man (C)	παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ Σατανᾷ (5:5)

Infinitives: A Statistical Study,” *Grace Theological Journal* 6, no. 1 (1985): 14–15. Wallace notes that the imperatival force of an infinitive is very rare. Boyer identifies eleven potential uses within the New Testament; however, 1 Corinthians 5:5 is not included in his list of possibilities. The imperatival usage is more common in classical Greek, typically in laws or proclamation. This sense would certainly qualify here, though these usages are typical when there is no main verb to which the infinitive can be connected.

163 Boyer, “The Classification of Infinitives,” 3–27; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 210.

(cont.)

Condemn the immoral man (A')	ἤδη κέκρικα ὡς παρὼν τὸν οὕτως τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον (5:3)
Confront the congregation (B')	Οὐ καλὸν τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν. (5:6)
Cast out the immoral man (C')	ἐκκαθάρατε τὴν παλαιὰν ζύμην ... (5:7)

In 1 Corinthians 5:9, Paul turns to the practical steps to be taken to reflect the preceding call for expulsion. Up to this point, the idea of removing the offender has been conveyed with subjunctive and infinitive verbal forms.¹⁶⁴ The final verses of the chapter provide a clear explanation of what removal looks like practically through specific imperatives. This is brought to bear by the twice-repeated imperatival negation *μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι* (do not associate, 1 Cor. 5:9, 11). Paul extrapolates his original intent in the previous letter with the parallel phrases *Ἐγραψα ὑμῖν* (I wrote you, 1 Cor. 5:9) and *νῦν δὲ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν* (but actually I wrote to you, 1 Cor. 5:11). He makes clear that the judging is for insiders only with the phrase *τοὺς ἔσω* (those who are within, 1 Cor. 5:12). He also makes clear that judging and removal are one and the same (1 Cor. 5:12–13). The passage echoes vocabulary utilized in the initial section of the pericope. That which should have been done in the beginning *ἀρθῇ* (would be removed, 1 Cor. 5:2) is now commanded to be done *ἐξάρατε* (Remove!, 1 Cor. 5:13).

6 Conclusion

The urgency and severity with which Paul addresses the situation of the immoral man in Corinth is best explained through evaluating the apostle's concern for the diminished reputation of the *ecclesia*. His bounded conceptualization of the *ecclesia* as an ingroup serves as the basis for such an assertion. Now we turn to an explication of how Paul conceived of the *ecclesia* by examining his implicit constructs of social identity in 1 Corinthians.

¹⁶⁴ The imperative form *ἐκκαθάρατε* is utilized, though it is embedded within the analogy.

The *Ecclesia* as Bounded Entity

Paul viewed the *ecclesia* as a distinct social entity, held together by shared beliefs about how a Christ-follower should live and relate to others. This conceptualization of group boundedness is communicated through implicit assumption rather than explicit declaration. To understand Paul's urgency and severity in response to the situation of the immoral man, the implied aspects of Paul's framework for group boundedness need to be clearly demarcated. Paul, of course, did not describe the *ecclesia* in the vocabulary of social identity, but social identity categories are nevertheless helpful in clarifying his belief that the *ecclesia* was a bounded entity. A quantification of Paul's implicit framework is the aim of this chapter, such that the implications of this framework can be applied to the situation of the immoral man. First, Paul's vocabulary in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 will be analyzed for ingroup and outgroup designations. Second, textual phenomenon in 1 Corinthians will be connected with conceptual terminology in a social identity approach. Third, Paul's treatment of baptism and his use of kinship language will be considered as examples of Paul's implicit framework of group boundedness.

1 Lexical Choices Indicating Group Boundedness

The initial confines of Paul's implicit framework of group boundedness are evidenced in the lexical choices made in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13. The most forthright reference to boundaries is found in Paul's label for unbelievers τοὺς ἔξω (those outside, 1 Cor. 5:12), which contrasts with Christ-followers who are τοὺς ἔσω (those inside, 1 Cor. 5:12). The πορνεία is present ἐν ὑμῖν (among you, 1 Cor. 5:1). The immoral man is to be removed ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν (from among you, 1 Cor. 5:2). The toleration of this sin is contrasted with the perceptions of the outgroup by the phrase ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (among the Gentiles, 1 Cor. 5:1). The entire pericope concludes with the insistence that the man be put out ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν (from among you, 1 Cor. 5:13). Additionally, prominent verbs indicate exclusion through motion away from or out of something. The immoral man should be ἀρᾶν (taken away, 1 Cor. 5:2) and παραδοῦναι (given over, 1 Cor. 5:5) to Satan. Regarding the analogy to leaven, he should be ἐκκαθάρατε (cleaned

out, 1 Cor. 5:7). In the end, he is to be ἐξάρατε (removed, 1 Cor. 5:13).¹ It is not merely the language of ‘in and out’ which marks boundaries either. The language of evaluation also indicates categorization. A derivative of κρίνω (judge, 1 Cor. 5:3, 12–13), a verb that speaks of assessment,² is used four times within the chapter, both in reference to God and the congregation. This process of judging whether a person belongs in or out of the group is indicative of social categorization.

Paul’s clarification regarding the prohibition to associate with immoral people also yields insight into the use of social identity as a basis for the instruction offered. Association with πόρνοις (immoral persons, 1 Cor. 5:10) and εἰδωλόλατραις (idolaters, 1 Cor. 5:10) is permissible, according to Paul. Avoiding such people would be impossible without leaving the world. It is not the sinful state of the immoral man which necessitates a break in fellowship. Rather, Paul’s response relates to the confusion which ensues because of the insistence on the part of the congregation that the man belongs within the *ecclesia*. Lexically speaking, it is significant that the very sin identified in the man is not prohibitive for fellowship as long as the one practicing πορνεία is a member of the outgroup. It can thus be seen that Paul is more concerned with group definition as it relates to witness than the specific behavior of the immoral man. This is also evidenced by the fact that Paul addresses the congregation more directly than the immoral man himself. Furthermore, the use of the term ἀδελφὸς ὀνομαζόμενος (so-called brother, 1 Cor. 5:11) is a sarcastic rebuke of the immoral man’s self-designation as an ingroup member. This lexical interplay is heightened by the fact that the man perpetuates his sin ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ (in the name of the Lord, 1 Cor. 5:4). These lexical observations indicate that Paul implicitly assumed the viability of designating people according to ingroup and outgroup categorizations.

2 Group Boundedness in Corinth

The assumptions that the vocabulary of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 discloses are evident in other aspects of the Corinthian correspondence as well. Before proceeding with drawing lines of correspondence between Pauline concepts and

1 Dana M. Harris, *An Introduction to Biblical Greek Grammar: Elementary Syntax and Linguistics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 142–43. Three of the four verbs (παραδοῦναι, ἐκκαθάρατε, and ἐξάρατε) are compound, intensified in emphasis by prepositional addition.

2 Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 567–69.

a social identity approach, a definition of the term 'group boundedness' is in order so as to be assured its intended meaning is adequately conveyed. The term is loosely inspired by sociologist Fredrik Barth.³ Barth acknowledged that ethnic identification is a distinct sense of belonging derived from a process of differentiation from others. Demarcation of boundaries is a critical aspect of ethnicity, yet doing so is a dynamic social process. Barth sought to unmoor concepts of ethnicity from essentialist constructs while still acknowledging the reality of group demarcation for ethnic identity. Similar points of tension exist in Pauline thinking, where a strong sense of demarcation develops from appeal to the holiness motif rooted in Hebrew concepts of cultic purity. Yet the *ecclesia* is simultaneously defined by a fluid social dynamic that exhibits diversity from city to city in the Roman Empire.

This understanding of the development of identity is helpfully clarified by Tucker when he itemizes several aspects of social identity in relation to the Corinthian community. According to Tucker, identity is an internalized, individual construct that is shaped in relation to group identity.⁴ The ethos which developed in the community as a result of the internal narratives was evidenced in the exhortations regarding speech and wisdom, the reorientation of perspective on status and morality, the definition of appropriate civic involvement and the instructions regarding worship. The social identity which developed was not singular, but rather multi-faceted. It might be said that identities are nested one within another and at times that they interconnect and overlap. Moreover, social identity is continually being negotiated. The moral shortcomings of the Corinthians should not be viewed merely as static ethical failures. They are a reflection of confused and developing identity as believers learn what it means to reflect the nature of Christ in the daily routine of life and community. This is not to say that there are no moral standards by which the believers ought to have lived, but rather that their failures may have derived from confusion over how to revise their identities appropriately. Identity is formulated by both performance and discourse, meaning that the repeated ritual reinforced identity and also that Paul's writings contributed to a clarified understanding of identity.⁵ The identity of members in the *ecclesia* was shaped by multiple realities in their environment and experiences, combined with the

3 Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Prospect Heights: Waveland, 1998), 9–38.

4 Tucker, *Remain in Your Calling*, 51.

5 Tucker, *Remain in Your Calling*, 51–56.

effect of Paul's writings in creating definition through clarification.⁶ Identity formation was a continual process, as noted by Kok and Roth:

One has to acknowledge that both the emergence of the movement that would later be known as 'Christianity' and the sense of being a 'Christian' was a gradual process of social construction that developed over an extended period of time. The implication of this perspective is that it is not correct to think of the Christian movement as having been a clearly defined, self-contained entity in its earliest decades. Furthermore, New Testament texts present interpreted and creative history; in other words, they are not merely historically descriptive, but are co-creative and subjective representations of particular authors' views at particular points in time.⁷

The term 'group boundedness' highlights the defined social interconnectivity found among Christ-followers within the *ecclesia* as well as the rules of engagement toward unbelieving outsiders with whom members still retained social relations. It does so with deference to how ethics and ethos determine identity, but also with an appreciation for the ways in which the confluence of Jewish and Roman identities was creating revised constructs of belonging.

The vocabulary of the social identity approach accords well with this process of identity formation underway in Corinth. Although Paul does not explicitly delineate his theory of group boundedness in the Corinthian correspondence, an implicit framework that corresponds well with the principle found within the social identity approach is evidenced in his writings. Paul begins 1 Corinthians by addressing vexing divisions within the *ecclesia*. The existence of such divisions speaks to the conceptualization of a superordinate group identity out of which subgroups are formulated. Furthermore, Paul assumes that the *ecclesia* is permeable by expressing his desire for outsiders to become insiders. Though permeable, the insider and outsider groups are quite distinct. The apostle draws clear boundaries between the two via specific vernacular designations which describe insiders and outsiders with categorical distinction. Paul expects that insiders will conform to group norms, and he makes social comparisons that exhibit processes of social categorization.

6 Tucker, *Remain in Your Calling*, 36–51. This aligns with Tucker's appropriation of William S. Campbell and Philip F. Esler in regard to identity construction. Both prior events and Paul's discursive agency contribute to the dynamic process of identity formation.

7 Kok and Roth, "Sensitivity toward Outsiders and the Dynamic Relationship between Mission and Ethics/Ethos," 4.

Each of these approaches by Paul builds the case for his implicit framework for group boundedness.

2.1 *Superordinate Identity*

Intragroup divisions in Corinth attest to a superordinate ingroup identity—a set of common confessions to which all parties agreed and which distinguished members from unbelievers. The matter of schisms within the Corinthian *ecclesia* surfaces as a prominent theme from the onset of the correspondence (1 Cor. 1:10–17). Though ironic, the existence of intragroup divisions implicitly affirms a defined sense of belonging, which might be labeled as a superordinate group identity. Superordinate identity conveys identity salience which extends beyond the distinctiveness of the subgroup. For meaningful cooperation to eventuate, the members of subgroups must have more than shared goals in common. They must identify positive, conjoining features which define the larger social group distinctively.⁸ Paul seeks unity of the subgroups by appealing to a set of common confessions to which all parties agreed and which distinguished members from unbelievers. The divisions in the *ecclesia* resulted from the conflict between definable sub-groups, divisions that would have been infeasible without some sense of belonging to a greater whole.⁹ As Stephen Chester points out:

Paul may be prepared to label the Corinthians as *νηπίοις ἐν Χριστῷ* (infants in Christ, 3:1), but he nowhere calls into question the genuine nature of their conversion. He appears confident that they are indeed in Christ. There is also little to suggest that Paul's teaching about Christ has been explicitly rejected. Even in response to a denial of the resurrection of the dead, Paul argues as if the raising of Christ is common ground (15:12). Paul and the Corinthians share a common set of religious symbols, and it is not in their choice of symbols that Paul finds fault with his converts. Instead, he is disturbed by the different manner in which the Corinthians construe the significance of these shared symbols.¹⁰

These sub-group conflicts are noticeably mentioned within the narrative in relation to the baptism of new converts. Interpreters tend to emphasize

8 Tucker, "1 Corinthians," 295–96; Brewer, "Superordinate Goals versus Superordinate Identity as Bases of Intergroup Cooperation," 127–29.

9 James D.G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-Examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2010), 117–18.

10 Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 214.

potential causes of the Corinthian divisions, but overlooked by this emphasis is Paul's appeal to the unifying features of the *ecclesia* as a remedy to the schisms. The apostle draws his audience's attention to beliefs that are held in common by both Paul and the Corinthian Christ-followers, regardless of their sectarian affiliation. The rhetorical questions in 1 Corinthians 1:13 denote underlying doctrinal affirmations. Paul asks *μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός*; (Has Christ been divided?, 1 Cor. 1:13) implying that Christ should not be divided.¹¹ Paul asks *μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν* (Paul was not crucified for you, was he?, 1 Cor. 1:13), implying that Paul was not the one crucified, but rather Christ. Paul asks *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε* (Were you baptized in the name of Paul?, 1 Cor. 1:13), implying that only Jesus' name is appropriate for baptism.

Paul's implicit answers to his rhetorical questions restate the common confessions affirmed by both Paul and the various parties in Corinth: believers are one in Christ (1 Cor. 12:12), Jesus was crucified for sinners (1 Cor. 15:3) and believers are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:11). Paul attempts to mitigate the effect of the divisions by embedding affirmation of core confessions for the *ecclesia* within his discussion of intragroup conflicts.¹² One need not resolve the matter of underlying ideology or causation for these subgroups in order to sustain the point that there were groupings belonging to a superordinate identity. F.C. Baur's Pauline-Petrine framework acknowledges the existence of subgrouping just as does Walter Schmithal's identification of Gnosticism or Theissen's social stratification.¹³ Paul addresses the divisions within the *ecclesia* by affirming the in-Christ identity of believers. Tucker sees the in-Christ identity as the norm-shaping reality which defines the *ecclesia*. He argues that the divisions associated with the persons baptizing are caused by reassignment of prototypical admiration to an influential individual.¹⁴ Paul

11 Thiselton translates *μεμέρισται* as "apportioned" meaning that Christ might "belong to a section." He suggests that the implied answer to the question is affirmative. Christ can and has been sectioned out. Thiselton further argues that this understanding affirms an early and traditional view of 1 Corinthians 1:13, held by, among others, Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa and Calvin. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 136.

12 Maria Pascuzzi, "Baptism-Based Allegiance and the Divisions in Corinth: A Reexamination of 1 Corinthians 1:13–17," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (2009): 814–15.

13 Walter Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971); Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004); Ferdinand Baur and Eduard Zeller, *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi: Sein Leben und Wirken, seine Briefe und seine Lehre*, 2nd ed. (Osnabrück: Zeller, 1968).

14 Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*, 162–66; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 33. Tucker makes the case that ethnic loyalties as well as social status are secondary in terms of defining a person within his or her Christian calling. Social identities attached to

counters that this admiration should be directed toward Christ, the true prototypical leader of the *ecclesia*. By misdirecting attention to human leaders within the congregation, attention is taken away from the development of the in-Christ identity to which Paul appeals as foundational for ingroup formation and unity. In 1 Corinthians 1:17, Paul elevates the importance of the cross of Christ. It is not that baptism is insignificant in Paul's framework, but rather that misdirected prototypical admiration through baptism competes with in-Christ identity and is thus counterproductive to the evangelistic mission of the *ecclesia*. As noted by Thiselton, the secular Corinthian "value system is corrected not by reformulating ecclesial polity, but by placing the community as a whole under the criterion and identity of the cross of Christ."¹⁵ It is Paul's rhetorical strategy to respond to the divisions by noting the essentially defining and unifying feature of the *ecclesia*: the shared belief in Christ's transformation of believers, not merely individually but also corporately as each individual finds identity in Christ.

Paul further appeals to a superordinate identity by considering specific issues within the *ecclesia* in terms of the whole rather than the divided subgroups. Paul begins 1 Corinthians by addressing a singular *ecclesia*, declaring that each member is sanctified, called-out and organically unified with all others who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:2). Immediately following, Paul confronts the divisions by referencing the parties involved. This theme of division continues through the end of 1 Corinthians 4:21. It is not until 1 Corinthians 11:17, where Paul addresses the manner in which Eucharist is celebrated, that factionalism surfaces once again as a specific topic. The interim themes (1 Cor. 5:1–11:16) of sexual morality, lawsuits, marriage, meat sacrificed to idols, Christian liberty and gender-specific roles are approached as matters which are relevant to the entire *ecclesia*, without reference to a particular party that somehow had deviated from other members.¹⁶ These issues are not

various groups should be maintained (with the exception of slavery since manumission could not be refused) as long as they do not conflict with the in-Christ identity. Thus, a critical question for consideration is how well a sub-group identification accords with the superordinate identification. Pre-existing social identities should not be set aside, but must be subsumed under Christ. Such sensitivity to subordinate and superordinate identities in Pauline rhetoric underscores his implicit conceptualization of group boundedness.

15 Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 33.

16 The matter of lawsuits is a potential exception to this, in that it specifically surfaces a matter of disagreement between two persons within the *ecclesia*. While the matter of lawsuits may be connected to the divisions noted in 1 Corinthians 1–4, this is not explicitly connected by Paul as he addresses the matter. Thus, from a rhetorical standpoint, the hiatus in addressing divisions continues from 5:1–11:17, even though the divisions within the *ecclesia* serve as background to the realities in Corinth. Moreover, it is entirely

noticeably informed or affected by the divisions within the *ecclesia*.¹⁷ Following his return to the theme of divisions in the matter of Eucharist (1 Cor. 11:17–34), Paul continues emphasizing the superordinate identity of the Corinthian *ecclesia* in the analogy of the *ecclesia* as the human body (1 Cor. 12:24b–27). Paul concludes that a correct appropriation of individual diversity strengthens the corporate identity of the body of Christ.¹⁸

While the divisions within the *ecclesia* are a disabling characteristic for Christ-followers, they nonetheless reveal Paul's implicit assumption that the *ecclesia* has a specific ingroup identity. Paul sought unity of the subgroups by appealing to a superordinate identity—a set of common confessions to which all parties agreed and which distinguished members from unbelievers. The Corinthian divisions do not represent fragmented, disassociated religious movements. Rather, they were subgroups that belonged to a carefully defined whole. Thus, Paul's acknowledgment of opposing ideas within the *ecclesia*, along with his solution of inculcating interdependence and distinction through appeal to a shared identity, demonstrates his implicit framework of group identity.

2.2 *Status Mobility and Group Permeability*

A person's ability to move between social groupings is determined by the nature of a group's boundaries. Some boundaries are highly permeable, whereas others are not.¹⁹ Paul differentiates between unbeliever and believer, making clear that an individual can affect status change by moving from the category of unbeliever to that of believer or, conversely, in the opposite direction. In other words, the *ecclesia* is a permeable social grouping open to the inclusion of new members into the social grouping. The Pauline concept of witness toward outsiders (1 Cor. 7:16; Rom. 11:11–16; 1 Thess. 4:9–12) results from viewing the *ecclesia* as a permeable entity.

The Corinthian correspondence provides four examples of Paul's making a clear distinction between believers and unbelievers along with his affirmation

possible that the divisions between parties represented in 1 Corinthians 6:1–11 is personal rather than endemic to the entire *ecclesia*. Zeller notes that it is somewhat ironic that the discord described in 1 Corinthians 1–4 is set aside for relative unity in regard to support for the immoral man. Paul seeks to focus this unity by asking for unanimous agreement regarding expulsion. Zeller, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 209.

17 Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 218–19.

18 Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 157–164, 267–270.

19 Linda A. Jackson et al., "Achieving Positive Social Identity: Social Mobility, Social Creativity, and Permeability of Group Boundaries," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 70, no. 2 (1996): 241–254.

that unbelievers might be regrouped as believers.²⁰ The first occasion of such status change occurs within the discussion of mixed marriages. Paul instructs Christ-following spouses married to unbelievers to remain in the relationship: τί γὰρ οἶδας, γύναι, εἰ τὸν ἄνδρα σώσεις; ἢ τί οἶδας, ἄνερ, εἰ τὴν γυναῖκα σώσεις; (For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?, 1 Cor. 7:16). Paul is making an optimistic assumption that status change is possible.²¹ The implication is that through faith, and therefore association with the *ecclesia*, the spouse will find salvation. Here Paul references a person within the confines of a definable outgroup, with the potential that this person might transition to the ingroup. Paul presents the *ecclesia* as a permeable entity and affirms that status change is not only possible but something for which believers should hope.

On a second occasion, Paul describes the prior religious orientation of Corinthian Christ-followers as ὅτε ἔθνη ἦτε (when you were pagans, 1 Cor. 12:2).²² Here Paul describes the past affiliations of the gentile Christ-followers in vivid terms. As noted by Ciampa and Rosner, he approaches the matter from the bifurcated perspective of Jewish thought:

20 Zeba A. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 130 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004), 155–69. The term ‘conversion’ is avoided here in this analysis. Crook has compellingly argued that modern constructs of individualized belief should be set aside for the Mediterranean concept of loyalty from client to patron. Even though Crook argues against psychological constructs for understanding belief in antiquity, his argumentation strengthens the point regarding a social identity perspective. If Paul conceived of himself as being in a client-patron relationship with God, there was a formal affiliation. His status had changed and the result was able to be observed by others.

21 Some scholars, particularly more recently, have argued that Paul is not optimistic about the prospects of status change in the unbelieving spouse. Nevertheless, the view that Paul is optimistically anticipating the possibility of change is far from novel or unsupported. See Christoph Burchard, “Ei nach einem Ausdruck des Wissens oder Nichtwissens Joh 9:25, Act 19:2, 1 Cor 1:16, 7:16,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 52, 1–2 (1961): 75; Joachim Jeremias, “Die misionarische Aufgabe in der Mischehe,” in *Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann*, ed. Walther Eltester (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1957), 255–60; Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 119–20; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 294.

22 Of course, one must decide from which previous ingroup orientation Christ-followers in Corinth derived: Hellenistic Judaism or paganism. As with identification of schism source(s), one need not resolve the conflicting history of scholarship relating to pre-conversion religious ideologies for the point to stand here that a transition occurred from prior allegiance to new allegiance.

[T]he Old Testament and the ancient Jews and Christians know of only two types of people: idolaters and those who only worship the one true God, the God of Israel. The central section of the *Shema* Deuteronomy 11:13–21 establishes only two alternatives: one will either ‘faithfully obey the commandments I’m giving you today—to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul’ (11:13), or ‘turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them’ (11:16). Before coming to Christ, the Corinthians were on the wrong side of that divide.²³

The term ἔθνεσιν (non-Israelite) has a broad semantic range, but it always denotes a group joined by the common feature of disbelief in the God of Israel.²⁴ Being an ἔθνεσιν was characterized by the worship of idols. Paul describes the unbelievers as being led toward mute idols, likely a reference to the common religious processions which paraded through the city of Corinth for the special commemoration of an idol.²⁵ The balance of 1 Corinthians 12 explicates the purpose that unity serves in the relationships of the *ecclesia*. Paul assumes his addressees have put aside their former allegiance to idols and now serve the one, true God. Paul includes the Corinthian Christ-followers in the Jewish ingroup by using the phrase πατέρες ἡμῶν (our fathers, 1 Cor. 10:1).²⁶

A third example of permeability derives from Paul’s narrative of his status change from a Jew who persecuted Christ-followers to a Christ-follower himself. Paul describes himself as ἑκτρωμα (untimely born, 1 Cor. 15:8), meaning an early end to pregnancy whether through miscarriage, abortion or stillbirth.²⁷

23 Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 564–65.

24 Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 78–79.

25 Terence Paige, “1 Corinthians 12:2: A Pagan Pompe?,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14, no. 44 (1991): 58–61.

26 This parallel is brought into great emphasis by the fact that Paul utilizes the phrase οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν (I do not wish you to be ignorant, 1 Cor. 10:1, 12:2) to introduce the idea that the former Gentiles are now a part of the ingroup.

27 I have argued elsewhere that ἑκτρωμα refers to a birth which exceeded the normal term. The position communicated here related to an early birth revises my prior stance in David E. Bosworth, “Group Boundedness in Corinth: Apocalyptic Dualism, Alternate Social Control, Paraenetic Expectation and Fictive Kinship,” in Kok, Webber and van Nes, *Drawing and Transcending Boundaries in the New Testament and Early Christianity*, 10. For a thorough itemization of varying views presented historically see Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1209–10. To the sources referenced in Thiselton might be added the following contributions as well: Harm W. Hollander and Gijbert E. van der Hout, “The Apostle Paul Calling Himself an Abortion: 1 Cor. 15:8 within the Context of 1 Cor. 15:8–10,” *Novum Testamentum* 38, no. 3 (1996): 224–36; Matthew W. Mitchell, “Reexamining the ‘Aborted Apostle’: An Exploration of Paul’s Self-Description in 1 Corinthians 15.8,” *Journal*

Paul's birth imagery in 1 Corinthians 15:8 can be read in light of Galatians 1:15–16. Paul believed that God had set him apart to his calling from his mother's womb. Luke references Paul as kicking against the goads (Acts 26:14), which may imply that Paul had fought against divine calling in his choice to persecute believers. Thus, Paul describes his apostleship as a miscarriage in that, unlike others such as Peter and James, there had not been a natural process of bringing his calling to fruition through personal discipleship with the incarnate Jesus.²⁸ By describing his own calling as a Christ-follower in the vocabulary of birth language, Paul notes the transition from womb to world.

Paul appeals to birth imagery to make his point in other places as well. He describes the process of establishing the Corinthian *ecclesia* in terms of begetting the Corinthian believers: ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς ἐγέννησα (I begat you, 1 Cor. 4:15).²⁹ This might be compared to Galatians 4:19 where Paul speaks of labor pains in the process of establishing the Galatian believers in the faith. Paul emphasizes his role as father to Timothy in 1 Corinthians 4:17.³⁰ While adoptive imagery rather than birth imagery is used here, it is clear that the child receives a new status that is transformative.³¹ Paul alludes to birth in 2 Corinthians 5:1–4 where he describes the believer's current state as naked and groaning to be clothed, which might be compared with Romans 8:22 where Paul describes the believer's longing for eschatological redemption in terms of the groaning of childbirth. Other allusions include 2 Corinthians 5:17, where metamorphosis is akin

for the Study of the New Testament 25, no. 4 (2003): 469–85. The point being made regarding Paul's implicit sense of group boundedness stands either way in light of the birth imagery, whether early or late.

28 The original articulation of this interpretation can be found at George W.E. Nickelsburg, "An Ektrōma, though Appointed from the Womb: Paul's Apostolic Self-Description in 1 Corinthians 15 and Galatians 1," *Harvard Theological Review* 79, 1–3 (1986): 200–204. See also Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1210; Mary Schmitt, "The Communal Dimensions of Birthing Imagery in Paul's Epistles," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 52, no. 1 (2017): 120–21.

29 The term γεννάω refers to the descendency of one generation to the next; however, it is often used metaphorically of birth as well in Matthew 19:12, Luke 1:13, 35, 57, 23:2 and John 1:13, 3:4. See Schmitt, "The Communal Dimensions of Birthing Imagery in Paul's Epistles," 117.

30 While fatherhood is not birth imagery *per se*, Paul makes the analogy in proximity to the term γεννάω (1 Cor. 4:15). Arguably, Paul is incapable of birthing a son and perhaps the adoptive imagery is as relevant here as that of physical birth.

31 Victor A. Copan, *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director: An Analysis of the Imitation of Paul with Implications and Applications to the Practice of Spiritual Direction* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 117–18. See fn 46 where Copan notes several examples of scholarly connection between imitation, spiritual fatherhood and the soteriological transition described in birth imagery.

to rebirth and 2 Corinthians 4:6, where Paul connects the introduction of light at the creation of the world to the Corinthians' spiritual enlightenment.

The birth event marks a transformation from one status to another—whether it be a person entering from spiritual death to spiritual life or a believer finding ultimate eschatological deliverance. Paul's transformation from an unbeliever to an apostle was nothing short of God's intervention, a birth that looked to be derailed apart from God's grace. By using such birth imagery in reference to his spiritual transformation, Paul demonstrates accordance with the Lukan perspective. He experienced a change that caused him to revise his affiliation from Pharisee to messianic Jew and Christ-follower. Though his understanding of the theological ramifications of his experience on the Damascus road took years to assimilate into his thinking, he immediately sought fellowship with Christ-followers in Damascus to the great surprise of the Jews, according to the Lukan testimony (Acts 9:19b–22).

In light of Paul's understanding that the *ecclesia* was a permeable entity where status change could be affected from outsider to insider, it should thus not be surprising that Paul describes the possibility of status change in the opposite direction when he indicates that the incestuous man should be removed from the *ecclesia* (1 Cor. 5:2). He is allowing for the same fluidity of group association that he observes in the previous three examples found in 1 Corinthians 7:16, 12:2 and 15:8. The fact that each of these was movement toward the *ecclesia* does not negate the possibility of movement away from the *ecclesia* via reassociation. In this situation, the problem was that the man was not reassociating of his own accord, and the *ecclesia* was also not requiring it of him. This left the *ecclesia* with a member who did not fit the ingroup criteria and who was too far from the group norms to warrant continued inclusion.³²

32 This observation regarding group definition is made irrespective of the somewhat, though not precisely, parallel discussion of a believer's security of salvation. The approach undertaken here allows for a person to remain in the status of 'saved' while simultaneously being disassociated from the social group labeled *ecclesia* (cf. Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 378; Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 295.). This may very well be the situation of the immoral man as Paul describes him, depending on how one interprets the destruction of the flesh and the salvation of the spirit in 1 Corinthians 5:5. Certain traditions strongly associate a Christ-follower's connection to the *ecclesia* with salvation, whereas others exhibit a looser association between the two. Thus, salvation along with disassociation would not be imaginable in ecclesiological-soteriological approaches which closely connect *ecclesia*-affiliation with salvation. This book examines the issue through the social lens, attempting to understand how Paul defined membership in the *ecclesia*, without addressing the theological conundrum of the spiritual status of the immoral man (cf. S.G. Wilson, *Leaving the Fold: Apostates and Defectors in Antiquity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 3.).

2.3 Vernacular Descriptions of Outsiders

The terms used to describe ingroup and outgroup members reveal a great deal about personal conceptions, group identity and boundary markers. Paul R. Trebilco labels the terms which individuals use to define themselves in distinction to others as “self designations”³³ and the terms used by insiders to describe those who are not included in the group as “outsider designations.”³⁴ Outsider designations found in 1 Corinthians demonstrate Paul’s implicit assumptions regarding distinct ingroup identity.³⁵ For instance, the term ἀπολλυμένοι (those who are perishing, 1 Cor. 1:18) contrasts with σωζόμενοι (those who are being saved, 1 Cor. 1:18). Here Paul argues that the cross is superior to human wisdom or philosophy. The apostle uses rhetoric to condemn ineffective rhetoric, employing the stylistic strategy of antithesis to make his point.³⁶ Further on in the letter, the term ἄδικοι (unrighteous, 1 Cor. 6:1) is distinguished from ἅγιοι (saints, 1 Cor. 6:1) and ἀδελφοί (brothers, 1 Cor. 6:1, 5). Here Paul asks a rhetorical question regarding the efficacy of lawsuits, making his point by “his shocked tone, interspersed with sarcasm, accusation and threat.”³⁷ Paul makes a clear contrast between those who would judge the case and those who should judge the case by asking if anyone τολμάω (dares, 1 Cor. 6:1).

In the passage under consideration regarding the immoral man, the phrase τοὺς ἔξω (outsiders, 1 Cor. 5:13) is juxtaposed with τοὺς ἔσω (insiders, 1 Cor. 5:12). These designations immediately precede a quote from Deuteronomy 13:5 to ἐξάρατε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν (remove the wicked man from among yourselves, 1 Cor. 5:13b). Just before the designations is a vice list which Brian S. Rosner has compellingly argued matches the five passages in

33 Paul R. Trebilco, *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1–3.

34 Paul R. Trebilco, *Outsider Designations and Boundary Construction in the New Testament: Early Christian Communities and the Formation of Group Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 3; Jermo van Nes, “Doing Good Deeds: Titus and the Shaping of Early Christian Identity,” in Kok, Webber and van Nes, *Drawing and Transcending Boundaries in the New Testament and Early Christianity*, 34–39. Van Nes demonstrates the application of Trebilco’s model of insider and outsider terminology in Titus, showing how Paul uses a specific lexical strategy to demonstrate the distinction between ingroup and outgroup.

35 Trebilco, *Outsider Designations and Boundary Construction in the New Testament*, 215–19. In fact, certain outsider designations present in 1 Corinthians are missing from Paul’s letter to the Romans. On this basis, it might be concluded that the continuation of pagan social practices after conversion posed a particular threat to the mission of the *ecclesia* in the Corinthian context.

36 Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, 27.

37 Richard A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 84.

Deuteronomy which call for exclusion as a consequence of violation: sexual promiscuity (Deut. 22:21), idolatry (Deut. 17:3, 7), false testimony (Deut. 18:18–19), drunkenness (Deut. 20:20–21) and theft (Deut. 24:7).³⁸ Thus, Paul makes a case for exclusion as the appropriate response by literary allusion to Deuteronomy. This rhetorical strategy then also enables the recipient of 1 Corinthians to apply the concepts of the set-apart people of God motif found in Deuteronomy to the situation in Corinth. Additionally, Paul describes unbelievers with the terms ἄπιστοι (unbelievers, 1 Cor. 6:6, 7:12–15, 10:27, 14:22–24, used ten times in total) and ἰδιῶται (untrained outsiders, 1 Cor. 14:16, 23–24), which is an out-group designation.³⁹ Trebilco characterizes these terms as “high boundary terminology”⁴⁰ meaning that they describe the outside party negatively and create a clear distinction between ingroup and outgroup.

2.4 Conformance to Group Norms

Tajfel identified a threefold process of group formation: social categorization, social identification and social comparison. Categorization might be made more obvious when skin color or some other physical expression serves as a delineator. However, when an ideological concept, a cultural construct for instance, is utilized to form the group identity, the norms of the group are very important for the identity. This is evident in Paul’s correspondence, where he appeals to shared norms which bridge multiple expressions of the *ecclesia* in various geographic locales. Paul begins his letter by noting the Corinthians’ connection to believers in other locations: τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ οὓσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ, ἡγιασμένοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις, σὺν πάνσιν τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, αὐτῶν καὶ ἡμῶν (To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours, 1 Cor. 1:2). This organic connectivity, expressed geographically, closes out the first section of the letter as well, where Paul indicates that Timothy will remind the Corinthians of τὰς

38 Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics*, 68–69.

39 Andrew D. Clarke, “Church Membership and the ἰδιῶτης in the Early Corinthian Community,” in *New Testament Theology in Light of the Church’s Mission: Essays in Honor of I. Howard Marshall*, ed. Jon Laansma et al. (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2011), 197–211. Clarke argues that the term ἰδιῶται surfaces a mediating category whereby the individual is neither insider nor outsider. Believers should be sensitive to the ἰδιῶται in their praxis such that this group might become insiders. Despite the nuanced interpretation of the lexical range of ἰδιῶται, Clarke nevertheless explicitly affirms the implicit framework of boundary demarcation in Pauline thinking.

40 Trebilco, *Outsider Designations and Boundary Construction in the New Testament*, 215.

οδούς μου τὰς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, καθὼς πανταχοῦ ἐν πάσῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ διδάσκω (my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church, 1 Cor. 4:17). Paul hedges against criticism that he is treating the Corinthians according to a different standard by deploying his record in other places as evidence of his consistency.⁴¹

Regarding the matter of believers married to unbelieving spouses, Paul tells them to remain as they are. He punctuates his instructions with the phrase οὕτως ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις πάσαις διατάσσομαι (in all the assemblies I instruct, 1 Cor. 7:17). This appeal to an accepted set of instructions, applicable in multiple contexts, is contrasted with Paul's opinion related to singles in the *ecclesia*. He has no command, but offers his opinion instead (1 Cor. 7:25), which is a reiteration of his previous distinction between a concession and command (1 Cor. 7:6). This contrast between Paul's contextualized advice and standardized command heightens the notion of an agreed-upon and articulated set of norms for the *ecclesia*.⁴²

A descriptive norm is present regarding head coverings: ἡμεῖς τοιαύτην συνήθειαν οὐκ ἔχομεν, οὐδὲ αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ θεοῦ (we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God, 1 Cor. 11:16). Moreover, Paul gives direction to the Corinthians related to their practices in worship by appealing to a universal code of conduct: δύνασθε γὰρ καθ' ἓνα πάντες προφητεῦειν ... Ὡς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῶν ἁγίων (you can all prophesy one by one ... as in all the churches of the saints, 1 Cor. 14:31, 33).⁴³ Paul seems to refer to a tradition that preceded him in his description of the Eucharist: Ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν (I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, 1 Cor. 11:23).⁴⁴ While Paul does not make an explicit reference to the practice in

41 John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. John Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1848), 173–74.

42 Peter J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles*, *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum Ad Novum Testamentum* 1 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990), 271.

43 The view is espoused here that the phrase ὡς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῶν ἁγίων relates to the previous verses rather than setting up the argument in 1 Cor. 14:34ff. This conclusion is reached primarily on the basis that the behavior expected of Corinthian women appears to be highly contextualized (potentially related to the prior experience of Corinthian Christ-followers with the oracle of Delphi and prophecy). Thus the exhortation related to silence in the *ecclesia* does not appear to be a universal injunction. Cf. Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 287; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 247.

44 Hans Conzelmann, Georg W. MacRae, and James W. Leitch, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, *Hermeneia: a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 196; Archibald M. Hunter, *Paul and*

other churches, here the implication is that the agreed-upon words of institution are uniform across the churches. According to Paul, the Corinthians ought to be celebrating the Eucharist as Paul taught them and as other Christ-followers celebrate across the empire. Aitken describes 1 Corinthians 11:23b–26 as “marked speech,”⁴⁵ meaning that it is authoritative within the tradition and that it “implies the existence of a community that has specific qualifications for ‘getting’ what it means.”⁴⁶ Paul has adopted vocabulary here that represents a tradition which he received.⁴⁷ The decoding of these formulaic words here belongs to people with understanding. The implication is that the Corinthians belong to a larger grouping of believers. They understand to whom these words refer and what is expected by way of cultic ritual. The celebration of the Eucharist bridged multiple congregations in varying locations. This standardization supports the idea that Paul sought to foster a defined identity based on a universal prototype, rather than merely contextualizing ethical standards in response to Corinthian concerns.

His instructions regarding the collection might also be included as evidence for Paul’s universal norms, and thus his implicit framework for group identity: *Περὶ δὲ τῆς λογείας τῆς εἰς τοὺς ἁγίους, ὥσπερ διέταξα ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιήσατε* (Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also, 1 Cor. 16:1). Here Paul indicates that he held the Corinthians to the same standard as the Galatians. Since the designation *τῆς Γαλατίας* (Galatians, 1 Cor. 16:1) likely refers to believers in several cities, it lends credence to the idea that Paul had established norms which applied to multiple (and perhaps all) the churches he initiated. These references bespeak of a developed paraenesis which had been articulated understandably. While these norms were deeply influenced by underlying ethical principles from the Jewish tradition, the *ecclesia* was also

His Predecessors (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 70–73; Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 156.

45 Ellen B. Aitken, “τα δρώμενα καὶ τα λεγόμενα: The Eucharistic Memory of Jesus’ Words in First Corinthians,” *Harvard Theological Review* 90, no. 4 (1997): 366–67.

46 Aitken, “τα δρώμενα καὶ τα λεγόμενα,” 366.

47 Amiel Drimbe, *The Church of Antioch and the Eucharistic Traditions (ca. 35–130 CE)*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe* 529 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 49–64. Drimbe offers very detailed explanations as to how Paul would have received this tradition to which he makes reference in 1 Corinthians 11, inclusive of the specific leaders within the *ecclesia* from whom these concepts would have been derived. Drimbe’s contention is that Paul mentions the tradition not so much because it adequately countered the specific problem in Corinth related to the Eucharist, but that it was very important to Paul.

developing a unique set of norms reflected in its own rituals, which became formative for the group by virtue of social categorization.

2.5 *Social Comparisons*

In social identity theory, comparison follows the cognitive processes of social categorization and social identification. Evidence of social comparison in 1 Corinthians further elucidates the existence of Paul's implicit framework for group formation. Paul not only makes ingroup to outgroup comparisons, for instance the delimitation of the *ecclesia* in contrast to the κόσμος (world, 1 Cor. 11:32), but he also develops more complex juxtapositions. In his discussion of meat sacrificed to idols, Paul compares practices of the *ecclesia* with those of Jews and Gentiles (1 Cor. 10:16–22). A similar tripartite distinction (*ecclesia*-Jews-Gentiles) occurs relative to the practice of the Eucharist: ἀπρόσκοποι καὶ Ἰουδαίοις γίνεσθε καὶ Ἑλλήσιν καὶ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ (Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 1 Cor. 10:32). Yet another example surfaces in the context of pagan idolatry. Paul differentiates Christ-followers from idol worshippers to show that Christ-followers understand the nature of the one true God whereas idol worshipers do not (1 Cor. 8:6). Pauline examples of social comparison exemplify outgroup negativity, describing the tendency of ingroup members to build their self-esteem through exaggeration of negative features of the outgroup. Paul shows regard for outsiders in the sense that dialogue with them was encouraged (1 Cor. 5:10). They apparently were welcomed as observers and potentially as converted worshippers into the joint assembly of the *ecclesia* (1 Cor. 14:23). Nevertheless, he still proposes a clear differentiation between believer and unbeliever even as he welcomes them into the *ecclesia*. Paul's comparisons demonstrate an implicit conceptualization of group boundedness.

2.6 *Mimesis and Prototypicality*

In the social identity approach, the norms of a group are encapsulated in a prototypical figure. Paul conveyed established ethical norms which had been accepted by the *ecclesia* more broadly, along with strong concern that adherence to these norms enables effective witness. His strategy to elicit imitation in his followers indicates the value of a prototypical figure for Paul. His two direct references to imitation in 1 Corinthians are both linked to the impetus for conformance to behavioral norms which result in effective witness.

Paul's first reference to being μιμητής (imitators, 1 Cor. 4:14) comes as a result of his exhortation (1 Cor. 4:16) which harkens back to his admonishment (1 Cor. 4:14), the latter having lexical implications of changed behavior related to norm conformance. Furthermore, he makes his encouragement in

the context of father-child imagery. Paul describes Timothy as his τέκνον (child, 1 Cor. 4:17). Clearly, this describes a spiritual birth, of which Paul is the father, metaphorically speaking, because Timothy is ἐν κυρίῳ (in the Lord, 1 Cor. 4:17). Paul also conceives of the Corinthians as his τέκνα (children, 1 Cor. 4:14). Paul birthed them ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (in Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. 4:15). Paul is commanding the Corinthians to replicate his witness to Timothy and to them.⁴⁸ This use of ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ terminology is directly linked to the spiritually transformative work of God in the lives of believers. As Michael J. Gorman notes, “[O]ur participation in the Messiah is possible only because God the Father has first participated with us by being present in the Messiah Jesus, a presence revealed both in the Messiah’s incarnation and death and in his ongoing resurrected life.”⁴⁹ In sum, Paul views himself as an exemplar for the Corinthians. He believed that his norm conformance to the boundary-defining distinctives of the *ecclesia* should be replicated.

The imitable action in Paul’s witness is not disconnected from the notion that Paul calls believers to participate with him in his sufferings, which has a direct bearing on witness. As noted by Plummer, “If the Corinthians are to imitate Paul by enduring suffering, mocking, and persecution, it is not ‘suffering for suffering’s sake.’ For the Corinthians, as for the apostles, their open adherence to and proclamation of the ‘foolishness of the cross’ will result in the world’s disapproval and opposition.”⁵⁰ In short, Paul calls the Corinthians to suffer for the ultimate purpose of effective witness.⁵¹ Paul is asking the

48 Copan, *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director*, 120–22.

49 Michael J. Gorman, *Participating in Christ: Explorations in Paul’s Theology and Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 5. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:19 where God was in Christ reconciling the world, and where believers receive this message of reconciliation by being in Christ as well.

50 Robert L. Plummer, “Imitation of Paul and the Church’s Missionary Role in 1 Corinthians,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44, no. 2 (2001): 231–32.

51 Cf. Linda L. Belleville, “‘Imitate Me, Just as I Imitate Christ’: Discipleship in the Corinthian Correspondence,” in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 120–42; H.H.D. Williams, “‘Imitate Me’: Interpreting Imitation in 1 Corinthians in Relation to Ignatius of Antioch,” *Perichoresis* 11, no. 1 (2013): 89. “In the final sentence of this concluding paragraph on the idol meat Issue, Paul injects the imperative, ‘Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ’ (11:1). Standing alone, this command is ambiguous, but the preceding verses make clear that we should understand it as a restatement of Paul’s exhortation to evangelistically-motivated service to others. The appeal to imitate Paul flows as a natural reiteration of the previous discussion, but the concluding reference to Christ is somewhat more enigmatic. Given the immediate context (i.e., the preceding verse), Paul seems to be saying that Christ was a model for him in that Christ did not seek his own advantage, but that of others—for their salvation. This understanding of Christ as selflessly giving

Corinthian Christ-followers to follow in his ὁδοῦς (ways, 1 Cor. 4:17), which “corresponds to the Hebrew understanding of *halakha*—a concept which weds teaching and behavior closely together.”⁵² Ultimately, Christ is Paul’s paragon, Timothy follows Paul and then the Corinthians emulate Timothy.

Similar concepts are expressed in 1 Corinthians 11:1, where immediately preceding, Paul has summarized his argument regarding meat and idols by the admonition: Εἴτε οὖν ἐσθίετε εἴτε πίνετε εἴτε τι ποιεῖτε, πάντα εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ ποιεῖτε (Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10:31). The reflection of an ethical norm in dining has the effect of avoiding offense to Greeks so that they might be saved (1 Cor. 10:32–33), which is followed by the command to be an imitator of Paul. Much has been made of the fact that Paul calls the Corinthians to imitate him rather than Christ, yet this fits well if the command is linked to the previous context. The Corinthians are to follow Paul’s example in accommodation for sake of witness just as Paul has followed Christ. The text of Philippians 2:3–11 might fill in what Paul does not state explicitly to the Corinthians. Jesus himself was willing to give up the glories of heaven to become human and accomplish redemption. In seeking to emulate Christ’s example, Paul has set aside certain dining practices (1 Cor. 8:13) and the right to collect income (1 Cor. 9:11–14). He has even engaged in practices that are not particularly natural to him (1 Cor. 9:19–23).⁵³

For Paul, imitation is a means by which he sets himself up as an exemplar for the Corinthians to live out the group norms. These norms are lived out so compellingly that outsiders can see the defining characteristics of the ingroup. Since the Pauline concept of imitation can be connected to the social psychological concept of prototypicality, it can be seen how Paul exhibits an implicit concept of group boundedness. By setting himself up as a prototypical figure, Paul offers a constructive reinforcement of ingroup identity for the *ecclesia*. Just as Paul is the norm-conforming exemplar, the immoral man is also an exemplar of sorts as well, though not in accordance with the appropriate norms. The Corinthian endorsement of the man demonstrates just how deeply the confusion regarding group norms runs within the *ecclesia*. The need for clarification in regard to who is the correct paragon explains in part the urgency and severity of Paul’s response.

himself for others’ salvation corresponds with Paul’s presentation of Christ in his other letters as well as the gospel traditions.” Plummer, *Paul’s Understanding of the Church’s Mission*, 90.

52 Copan, *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director*, 120.

53 Copan, *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director*, 140–42.

3 Examples of Identity-Forming Constructs

Thus far, we have seen that the language of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 and the Pauline notion of group boundedness show implicit assumptions on the part of the apostle. Many examples could be drawn from the Corinthian correspondence to illustrate how Paul works out and applies his framework of group boundedness, though two are prominent within the text. The ritual of baptism and the use of kinship language both depict implicit concepts of group boundedness. As an initiatory rite, baptism marks the transition from outsider to insider and thus displays an inherent sense of ingroup affiliation.⁵⁴ Kinship language is pervasive in the letter and connects existing sociological constructs of ingroup affiliation with Paul's views of the *ecclesia*.

3.1 *Baptism*

The perceptions of both believers and unbelievers regarding baptism brought definition to the ingroup identity of the Corinthian *ecclesia*. Christ-followers viewed baptism as an initiatory rite, symbolizing the transition from death to life. Paul analogizes this transition by comparing the Corinthians to the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, using baptism as a controlling metaphor (1 Cor. 10:2). He uses a lexically vivid and diverse set of words to describe the consequences of sin: καταστρώννυμι (laid low, 1 Cor. 10:5), πίπτω (fell, 1 Cor. 10:8, 12), ἀπόλλυμι (destroyed, 1 Cor. 10:9–10). Idolatry, immorality and unrighteousness are associated with death. Conversely, faith brings life through the pneumatic enablement of righteousness and pure devotion to the true God (1 Cor. 3:16, 6:17–19, 7:14).

The meaning of baptism is located not only in the lexical descriptions and analogies but also in the social significance of the rite. Several scholars have considered the social function of baptism in forming the ingroup identity of Christ-followers. Wayne Meeks offered an initial defining assessment by discussing how the symbolism of the ritual affected social definition for the participants.⁵⁵ Christ-followers were baptized into the *ecclesia*, and as they were, they were supposed to leave behind modalities of the world system. This did not always happen, for believers lived among and interacted regularly with unbelievers whose ways of thinking were pervaded by concepts that ran

54 The ritual of Eucharist is arguably more prominent than baptism within the text of 1 Corinthians. This will be addressed in much more detail in chapter 6, where the value of performative ritual for identity formation is considered.

55 Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 150–57.

antithetical to a renewed mind in Christ. As such, the structure and values of the world crept into the *ecclesia*. Baptism was a critical rite for inculcating the transition which occurred, and for exhorting believers regarding the basis for change that should occur.

Ellen Juhl Christiansen proposed that Meeks might have gone even further in emphasizing the social aspects of the ritual. For her, the social implications of baptism superseded even the symbolic expressions:

While rituals in general mark a change of social identity either because they mark a change within the community related to maturity or to change of status within the community, entrance rites, in particular, signify that an exit from one group and an entry to another takes place, as 'separation, transition and aggregation'. While they function as a means of defining the social boundary of the community, they also proclaim that identity is group commitment. Since boundaries express both social and religious self-awareness—manifest in beliefs, rites, norms etc.—they define the ground of a shared identity and are the fundamental basis for self-definition.⁵⁶

Much attention has been given to the idea of group association and identity as formed by the ritual of baptism.⁵⁷ Although varying scholars approach the

56 Ellen J. Christiansen, *The Covenant in Judaism and Paul: A Study of Ritual Boundaries as Identity Markers* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 15–16.

57 Richard E. DeMaris, *The New Testament in Its Ritual World* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 49–50. Richard E. DeMaris surmised that the baptistic ritual contained subtle elements of opposition to the Roman political structure. Richard E. DeMaris, "Backing Away from Baptism: Early Christian Ambivalence about its Ritual," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 27, no. 1 (2013): 11–19. DeMaris affirmed the group-forming capacity of baptism as a ritual, though he also argued that the *ecclesia* minimized it in an effort to reduce political conflicts. Agnes Choi, "Boundary-crossing in Christian Baptism," in *Early Christian Ritual Life*, ed. Richard E. DeMaris, Jason T. Lamoreaux and Steven C. Muir (London: Routledge, 2017), 75–89. Agnes Choi follows DeMaris, but also analyzes baptism as a water ritual which distinguished Christ-followers from both Jewish and Roman outgroups. Choi contends that Meeks' reliance on Turner for a threefold transitional structure is not warranted, and opts for twofold process as outlined in the category of political affiliation. Despite this disagreement, she nevertheless makes numerous points regarding how baptism would effectively separate out Christ-followers as a socially distinct group in the midst of their theological commitments. Bruce Hansen, *'All of You are One': The Social Vision of Gal 3:28, 1 Cor 12:13 and Col 3:11* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 1–30. Bruce Hansen considered the social ramifications of the baptism formula in Galatians 3:28, 1 Corinthians 12:13, and Colossians 3:11. Here the social categories of gender, ethnicity and class are vividly linked to baptism by Paul. Tucker, *Remain in Your Calling*, 139–58. J. Brian Tucker connected Roman practices related to patronage and attendance at the bath with the conflicts over

matter in different ways, there seems to be relative unity regarding two aspects of this discussion. First, the *ecclesia* relied upon baptism for identity definition. Second, baptism possessed social implication, a point which is often under-emphasized in the preponderance of doctrinal analyses. A closer look at how baptism reinforces identity within 1 Corinthians is warranted.

Paul references baptism on five occasions within 1 Corinthians. The first reference (1 Cor. 1:13) appears in the context of Paul's confrontation of divisions and sectarianism within the *ecclesia*. Paul seems to dismiss the value of baptism by noting that he did not even recall whom he baptized when he was among the Corinthians. This is a rhetorical device, and it should not be taken to mean that Paul failed to affirm the importance of baptism within the *ecclesia*. Rather, as noted previously, he confronted the way in which baptism was being used to fuel the flames of dissension. The Corinthian Christ-followers may have possessed differing understandings as to the meaning of baptism, yet the intragroup divisions do not seem to be related to discrepancies about the validity of baptism itself. It seems that baptism was being used as an initiatory rite into the sub-group rather than the superordinate grouping of in-Christ identity.⁵⁸ Paul's dismissal of baptism here is a denial of the efficacy of baptism for sub-group identification, and thus of its use to fuel the divisions within the *ecclesia*. In a later reference (1 Cor. 10:17), he emphasizes the unity that baptism symbolizes and encourages.⁵⁹

The second reference (1 Cor. 6:11) is a thematic appeal to baptism.⁶⁰ His explanation of the Christ-follower's new status ἀλλ' ἀπελούσασθε, ἀλλ' ἡγιασθητε,

baptism in Corinth. He draws from the social understanding within the Corinthian context to explain their misappropriation of the symbolism of baptism. Anders K. Petersen, "Rituals of Purification, Rituals of Initiation," in *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, ed. David Hellholm, *Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 176 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 15–17. Anders Klostergaard Petersen approached the matter of baptism from the vantage of how rites of initiation in utopian (eschatologically oriented) religions create a defined sense of association with a specific group. Note that the term 'group' has been imposed on Petersen here; he prefers the terms 'cult' or 'association.'

58 Tucker, "1 Corinthians," 295–96.

59 Tucker, *Remain in Your Calling*, 156–58. Tucker argues that the divisions noted in 1 Corinthians 1:11–13 do not necessarily make baptism itself inherently divisive. By offering an underlying cause for the subgroup orientations, the theme of unity can be described as an attribute of the superordinate in-Christ grouping conceived of by Paul.

60 Samuli Siikavirta, *Baptism and Cognition in Romans 6–8: Paul's Ethics Beyond "Indicative" and "Imperative"* Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe 407 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 106. Paul does not employ βαπτίζω here, but rather ἀπολούω. Yet, this reference seems to be a nascent expression of the theology which is further developed in Romans 6:1–8:39. There Paul contextualizes baptism within the ethical

ἀλλ' ἐδικαιώθητε (but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified, 1 Cor. 6:11) immediately follows a vice list which characterized the Corinthian Christ-followers in their pre-baptized status of outgroup membership (1 Cor. 6:9–10).⁶¹ This mention of baptism comes in the context of strong contrast between outgroup unbelief and ingroup belief. Consider the terms used to describe unbelievers: ἄδικος (unrighteous, 1 Cor. 6:1,8), κόσμος (world, 1 Cor. 6:2), ἐξουθενημένους ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ (of no account in the church, 1 Cor. 6:4) and ἄπιστος (unbeliever, 1 Cor. 6:6). These come in juxtaposition to the terms describing Christ-followers: ἅγιος (saint, 1 Cor. 6:1–2) and ἀδελφός (brother, 1 Cor. 6:5–6, 8).⁶² Thus, 1 Corinthians 6:11 underscores the fact that baptism symbolizes the spiritual renewal of the Christ-follower at baptism, and that the washing which a believer experiences provides a new insider status. Meeks points out that the baptistic imagery here correlates with the admonitions to moral purity in the surrounding context of Paul's teaching against suing fellow believers:

What is really polluting is that their suits imply a desire to cheat one's 'brother,' which is behavior typical of what they were, as outsiders, before "you were washed, you were made holy, you were justified ..." (6:1–11). That allusion to baptism, as we saw, led Paul's argument back to concern with sexual matters, now in terms of the purity of the individual body: united with Christ as if (spiritually) in marriage, the body (like the community: 3:16) is a "temple of the Holy Spirit within you" (6:12–20). As we shall see, those motifs also are closely connected with baptism. Paul's argument depends on common recognition that baptism draws a line between the unwashed world and the washed Christians, and that 'clean' is a metaphor for 'behaving properly.'⁶³

transformation of the Christ-follower from the old nature to the new. Given the likely provenance of the letter to the Romans from Corinth, the connection between Paul's explanations about baptism in 1 Corinthians with the ideas of Romans are warranted.

61 Hartman offers detailed exegetical consideration of each verbal term describing the believer in his new status: washed, sanctified, justified. "In this passage Paul uses that feature of his baptismal belief that baptism mediates the remission of sins and 'sanctifies' those who are baptized. In consequence the baptized person must lead a life which corresponds to this status." Lars Hartman, *'Into the Name of the Lord Jesus': Baptism in the Early Church*, Studies of the New Testament and Its World (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 65–66.

62 Tucker, "1 Corinthians," 303.

63 Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 153–54.

The third reference to baptism (1 Cor. 10:1–2) is connected to a Eucharistic allusion and couched in the imagery of Israel's wilderness wanderings (1 Cor. 10:3–4). The Lord had chosen the Israelites as his people, yet idolatry (1 Cor. 10:7), immorality (1 Cor. 10:8) and complaining (1 Cor. 10:9–10) resulted in discipline because they had ceased to perform their covenant duties and thus failed to serve as a witness to the Gentiles. The importance of ethical living and covenant obedience is linked to the ceremony of baptism. The baptism in view here is analogous to the movement of the Israelites through the Red Sea just before the wilderness wanderings. Paul employs a metaphorical approach that overtly warns regarding both baptism and the Eucharist that sinful deviation from God's covenant standards has severe consequences (cf. 1 Cor. 11:29–31).⁶⁴ Baptism is a means by which a covenant relationship is communicated. Certain behavior is expected in light of God's miraculous deliverance.

The fourth reference (1 Cor. 12:13) emphasizes the status equality of ingroup membership for Christ-followers. Ethnicity and social standing are not obliterated, yet the in-Christ identity is most salient for ingroup identity. The diversity which comes from varying ethnicities and social levels (along with the various gifting of the Spirit) is the source of unity. Relying on the analogy of the body as needing all parts for proper functioning, Paul argues that baptism is an affirmation of unity despite diversity. It consolidates group identity by rendering aspects of identity such as ethnicity (and status as a slave or free person) as secondary to the unity expressed in baptism. The ritual of baptism becomes a critical component for expressing belonging to the *ecclesia*. No parts of the body are without importance, even if some are not visibly engaged in the functioning of the body. Baptism demarcates the entrance into a defined entity, analogized by Paul to the human body. The connectivity of the body to Christ himself (1 Cor. 12:12) immediately precedes the reiteration of this unifying principle in the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13).⁶⁵ The social significance of baptism is found in the ways in which spiritual transformation eliminates other equally defining features of identity. When a Christ-follower enters into the *ecclesia*, the social implications of gender, ethnicity and status are revised for sake of illustrating equality in the domain of the community.

The fifth reference to baptism (1 Cor. 15:29) is the most enigmatic. The dearth of information as to the nature of baptism for the dead leaves scholars

64 Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 125–27. Dunn notes this Pauline rhetorical pattern of use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, including Gal. 3:8, 4:21–31; 1 Cor. 9:8–10; 2 Cor. 3:7–18.

65 Hartman, 'Into the Name of the Lord Jesus', 66–67; Tucker, "1 Corinthians," 315.

in significant disagreement as to how this ought to be interpreted.⁶⁶ While the lack of clarity regarding the baptism of the dead may leave scholars frustrated, the absence of clarification does highlight the fact that it was not necessary for Paul to offer any explanation of the ritual to the Corinthians. The obscurity of this practice to modern scholars does not mean that its significance was obfuscated for the original recipients. Paul utilizes the practice of baptism for the dead as a constructive component in his argumentation for the resurrection, with the full expectation that the Corinthians understood how this ceremony functioned. Herein we possess an indication that the Corinthians had a defined ritual, reflecting their shared understanding of its meaning and which contributed to their concept of ingroup identity.⁶⁷

The parallelism between Romans 6:1–12 and 1 Corinthians 15:3–10 might also be noted in this regard. While the latter is not a baptistic reference or allusion, the reverse does appear to be the case. In Romans 6:1–12, Paul connects baptism with the death-burial-resurrection motif found in 1 Corinthians 15:3–5. In his description of baptism in Romans 6:4, the ethical implication of baptism is most clearly stated: συνετάφημεν οὖν αὐτῷ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος εἰς τὸν θάνατον, ἵνα ὡσπερ ἠγέρθη Χριστὸς ἐκ νεκρῶν διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρὸς, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν (Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life, Rom. 6:4).⁶⁸ Thus, Paul ends his letter to the Corinthians with a clear declaration of Christ's resurrection power, which he connects to baptism in his letter to the Romans.

The previous analysis has focused on baptism as conceived of by Paul; however, the ways in which baptism was viewed by gentile converts and outsiders

66 Nicholas Taylor, *Paul on Baptism: Theology, Mission and Ministry in Context* (London: SCM Press, 2016), 132–38; Nicholas Taylor, “Baptism for the Dead (1 Cor 15:29)?,” *Neotestamentica* 36, 1–2 (2002): 111–20; Michael F. Hull, *Baptism on Account of the Dead (1 Cor 15:29): An Act of Faith in the Resurrection*, Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica 22 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 1–49; Mark Taylor, *1 Corinthians: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville: Holman Reference, 2014), 391–92.

67 Regarding the matter of baptism for the dead: “No explanation is fully satisfactory, but the verse says more about some of the Corinthians’ thoughts on baptism and nothing certain about Paul’s understanding beyond what is known from other texts.” Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 155.

68 Newness of life is subsequently clarified by Paul to mean freedom from sin: τοῦτο γινώσκοντες ὅτι ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας, τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ὃ γὰρ ἀποθανὼν δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας (knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin, Rom. 6:6–7).

have relevance as well. Gentile Christ-followers likely associated previous concepts of religious water ritual as they sought to interpret their experiences in the *ecclesia*. Likewise, outsiders probably appraised the significance of baptism as a ritual which categorized a Christ-follower as an identifiable adherent to the movement. Greco-Roman religious cults operative in proximity to Corinth mid-first century AD for which we have evidence of water-based rituals either for purifying or initiatory purposes (or both) include Asclepius,⁶⁹ Apollo,⁷⁰ Eleusinian Mysteries, Dionysus and Isis.⁷¹ Scholars have often discussed whether the Greco-Roman religions were the backdrop against which the *ecclesia* constructed its rituals. While this discussion is tangentially relevant, it is in no way necessary to argue that Christian ritual had any predecessor in pagan practices in order to affirm that the existence of water ritual in pagan religions would have further defined ingroup identity for the *ecclesia* as a result of pagan perceptions of Christian practices.

Indeed, evidence that baptism was derived from pagan sources is lacking, but the water rituals of pagan religions might be considered a part of the “common ritual language”⁷² which would have been intelligible to all. By participating in a cultic water ritual, Christ-followers would have been perceived by pagans as engaging in a standard cultic allegiance, even if the content of the doctrine varied from situations where water rituals were in use by pagans in mystery religions or other Greco-Roman cults.⁷³

69 Emma J. Edelstein and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius: Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 148–53; Gerald D. Hart, *Asclepius: The God of Medicine* (London: Royal Society of Medicine Press, 2000), 54–55, 68–69.

70 Jill E. Marshall, *Women Praying and Prophesying in Corinth: Gender and Inspired Speech in First Corinthians*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 70. Although note the conclusion that Roman era water source may have been closed up during first century AD.

71 Jan N. Bremmer, *Initiation into the Mysteries of the Ancient World*, *Münchener Vorlesungen Zu Antiken Welten 1* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 114; Arthur D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 155; Apul., *Met. 11*.

72 Fritz Graf, “Baptism and Graeco-Roman Mystery Cults,” in Hellholm, *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism*, 114.

73 Petersen, “Rituals of Purification, Rituals of Initiation,” 25–34. See Petersen's distinction between religions of salvation and religions of blessing in regard to the emphasis each places on initiation or purification in ritual. In the sense that these Roman religions were more oriented toward blessing, the emphasis on purificatory aspects of water rites would fit this pattern. Baptism was primarily initiatory in the New Testament, with some purificatory implications. Water rituals in pagan religions were often repeated and emphasized purificatory meaning. This distinction is significant in terms of the way in which a water ritual factored into the cult identity. Nonetheless, pagans were familiar with water rituals as a source of identification with a religious cult. In this sense, participation in baptism on the part of Christ-followers would have created a distinct sense of ingroup affiliation

Baptism initiated Christ-followers not only into the *ecclesia* but also unto eternal life. The eschatological implications of initiation are clear, and thus baptism launched the initiate into the process of evaluating and reevaluating how to live in this life and in light of the age to come.⁷⁴ Official affiliation with the body of Christ had implications, as can be seen in the case of the immoral man. Christ-followers were subject to enforcement of paraenetic standards related to their membership. Baptism was the ritual by which an ingroup member was to be held to account through measures of social control. Outgroup members did not have to attain the same standards as insiders. The way in which Paul references baptism in these five instances within 1 Corinthians indicates an implicit framework of group boundedness where the ritual of baptism inculcated the same sense in group members. As an initiatory rite, baptism provided the foundation upon which Paul could build his case that the immoral man was deviating from norms that ought to characterize baptized believers.

3.2 *Kinship Affinity*

Paul felt compelled to emphasize the familial connection between believers in the context of his exhortations regarding baptism. Each of the five references to baptism in 1 Corinthians includes the appositive ἀδελφοί (brothers, 1 Cor. 1:1, 6:8, 10:1, 12:1, 15:31). Throughout the letter, Paul makes use of kinship language to affirm the relational obligations which Christ-followers had toward one another. By analogizing the *ecclesia* as family, Paul appeals to recognized cultural norms which would have caused the recipients to understand the *ecclesia* as a distinct ingroup.

3.2.1 Kinship Language

Examples of kinship language are replete in 1 Corinthians. The most prevalent example of this is the sibling metaphor. The usage of a cognate of ἀδελφός in 1 Corinthians outpaces all of the undisputed Pauline letters by a significant margin.⁷⁵ Sosthenes and Apollo are called ἀδελφοί (1 Cor. 1:11, 16:12). Christ-followers are referenced as ἀδελφοί throughout and even in some instances ἀδελφαί.⁷⁶ Kinship constructs are also evident in Pauline focus on the “past

in the perspective of outsiders observing. On the matter of pagan water practices akin to baptism see Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 152–53.

74 Hartman, *‘Into the Name of the Lord Jesus’*, 79–80.

75 Lim, *Metaphors and Social Identity Formation in Paul’s Letters to the Corinthians*, 85. Taking references in 1 & 2 Corinthians, forty-five percent of the usages occur in the Corinthian correspondence.

76 Reidar Aasgaard, *My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!: Christian Siblingship in Paul*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 265 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 124–25.

and future of the patrilineal kin group.”⁷⁷ Paul looks ahead via an inheritance *topos* in 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 (cf. 1 Cor. 15:50), and he looks back with reference to forefathers in 1 Corinthians 10:1–3. He proposes that God is the father of believers (1 Cor. 1:3, 8:1–6, 15:24), which implicitly affirms the siblingship of believers as well.⁷⁸ Katherine Birge notes that God’s role as a father is affirmed by Paul and emphasizes Paul’s fatherly love (1 Cor. 4:17; cf. 1 Cor. 16:24).⁷⁹ Paul also casts himself in the role of parent, both father (1 Cor. 4:14–17) and mother (1 Cor. 3:2). As noted previously, he speaks of Timothy as his child in the faith (1 Cor. 4:17) and the call to imitation is predicated on Paul’s position as spiritual father and exemplar.⁸⁰ Furthermore, Paul presents himself as a disciplinarian. Joseph H. Hellerman sees an *inclusio* in 1 Corinthians 4:14–21, where Paul begins with an admonition and ends with the threat of corporal punishment, such that the Corinthians would have received Paul’s advice in the vein of parental guidance.⁸¹ Paul views himself as admonishing and teaching the Christ-followers in Corinth to grow up (1 Cor. 3:1–3) into mature adults in the faith. Tucker views the pedagogical approach of Paul to the Corinthians as distinct, noting that “Paul’s ancient brand of social identity work may be described as kinship-formation.”⁸² Whether as sibling, parent or pedagogue, it is no exaggeration to say that familial terms and imagery are found throughout the letter of 1 Corinthians.⁸³

3.2.2 Kinship Ethos

Paul seeks to shape the Christ-followers’ social identity through kinship formation so that they might view themselves as an “alternative community with a distinct ethos living in the Roman Empire.”⁸⁴ Many of Paul’s exhortations regarding specific situations in Corinth exhibit this kinship ethos. For instance, Paul exhorts Christ-followers to live without divisions (1 Cor. 1:10–13) at the beginning of his letter. He counters the agonistic tendencies of the Corinthian *ecclesia*, which were evidenced in the divisive parties, by encouraging

77 Joseph H. Hellerman, *The Ancient Church as Family: Early Christian Communities and Surrogate Kinship* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 101.

78 Aasgaard, *My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!*, 124.

79 Birge, *The Language of Belonging*, 44.

80 Hellerman, *The Ancient Church as Family*, 102. *Mimesis* is connected to kinship in that the ideal son would replicate his father in all or many aspects of life, including religious allegiance and vocation.

81 Hellerman, *The Ancient Church as Family*, 103.

82 Tucker, *Remain in Your Calling*, 58.

83 Kok, Jacobus, “Drawing and Transcending Boundaries in the Dutch Reformed Church: A Social Identity and Critical Correlatory Perspective on Missional Challenges in Post Apartheid South Africa” (PhD, University of Pretoria, 2016), 173–75.

84 Tucker, *Remain in Your Calling*, 60.

them to view themselves as family. In an honor-shame framework, this meant that the honor of the family unit was protected against incursion from outsiders. Rather than competing against each other, the Corinthians were to defend their family honor among unbelievers.⁸⁵ This protection of honor has many expressions. Paul calls Christ-followers to consider the needs of a weaker brother (1 Cor. 8:9), to share in a common meal together with patience for one another (1 Cor. 11:33) and to bestow honor by valuing those who seem to be less honorable (1 Cor. 12:22–26).⁸⁶ Perhaps most compelling in terms of an example of Pauline appeal to kinship is the case of two Christ-followers litigating against each other in court (1 Cor. 6:1–11). The Mediterranean value of familial solidarity was at the center of Paul's refutation of such practices. He asks with great rhetorical flair ἀλλ' ἀδελφὸς μετὰ ἀδελφοῦ κρίνεται καὶ τοῦτο ἐπὶ ἀπίστων; (but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?, 1 Cor. 6:6). Of course, the two parties were not actually brothers, or they would not have entertained the idea of litigation. As Plutarch notes,

οὐκοῦν τούναντίον ἐρώντες ἀλλήλων καὶ φιλοῦντες ἀδελφοί, καὶ ὅσον ἡ φύσις τοῖς σώμασι διέστησεν, ἐπὶ ταῦτ' οἱ πάθουσι καὶ τοῖς πράγμασιν ἀποδιδόντες, καὶ λόγους κοινούς καὶ διατριβὰς ἅμα καὶ παιδιάς μετ' ἀλλήλων ἔχοντες, ἡδεῖαν καὶ μακαρίαν παρεσκευάκασιν γηροτρόφον τοῖς γονεῦσι τὴν φιλαδελφίαν.⁸⁷

Clearly, the two Christ-followers in litigation misunderstood the kinship bonds which should have persisted between Christ-following brothers.⁸⁸ Paul redresses this misperception on the part of the litigants as well as the community of believers. In fact, just as Paul does with the immoral man, his admonition is directed more toward the *ecclesia* than the violators themselves. Paul

85 deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 59–60; Hansen, 'All of You are One', 126–28; Hellerman, *The Ancient Church as Family*, 43–51.

86 deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 168. Paul's appeals might be compared to Plutarch's family ideals of συμφωνία and ὁμονοία.

87 Plut., *Mor. De frat. amor.* 480 B-C. "Hence when, on the other hand, brothers love and feel affection for each other, and, in so far as Nature [*sic*] has made them separate in their bodies, so far do they become united in their emotions and actions, and share with each other their studies and recreations and games, then they have made their brotherly love a sweet and blessed 'sustainer of old age' for their parents." Plutarch, *Moralia, Volume VI: Can Virtue Be Taught? On Moral Virtue. On the Control of Anger. On Tranquility of Mind. On Brotherly Love. On Affection for Offspring. Whether Vice Be Sufficient to Cause Unhappiness. Whether the Affections of the Soul are Worse Than Those of the Body. Concerning Talkativeness. On Being a Busybody*, trans. W.C. Helmbold, Loeb Classical Library 337 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), 259.

88 Lim, *Metaphors and Social Identity Formation in Paul's Letters to the Corinthians*, 111–14; Birge, *The Language of Belonging*, 51–71; Hellerman, *The Ancient Church as Family*, 104–6.

chooses to confront the litigiousness in Corinth through an appeal to concepts of kinship. As summarized by Katherine Birge,

For both his points, that bringing another Christian before a pagan court is unacceptable and that to have a legal dispute between Christians is a defeat even before they get to arbitration, the key rhetorical device in Paul's argument is his use of kinship language. His argument turns on the fact that (1) they are family; (2) as such, they belong to one another in a way they no longer belong to their larger society; and (3) the demands of having been defined into kinship with one another, despite difference in social class, require them to act as kin.⁸⁹

The family metaphor is applied in other provocative ways as well. The metaphorical kinship present in the *ecclesia* also interfaced with approaches to actual kinship bonds as well. Regarding marriage, Paul even asks the Corinthians to reorder kinship structures in light of their membership in the *ecclesia* (1 Cor. 7:1–40). According to Paul, they should prioritize brother-sister relationships, even if fictive in nature, over and above family bonds through marriage.⁹⁰ Marriage might even be wisely foregone in light of the family relationships found within the *ecclesia*.⁹¹

Regarding the situation of the immoral man, kinship concepts are present as well. By the illicit relationship with his stepmother, the immoral man has formed an inappropriate kinship, one which does not exist as a legitimate social option. This is a familial bond that should occur neither under the Jewish law nor in the secular society at large. Joshua M. Reno has argued that Paul's phraseology in 1 Corinthians 5:1 highlights this inappropriate kinship. The phrase *γυνή τοῦ πατρός* (his father's wife) may be a periphrasis used as an analytic kin circumlocution for *μητρύα* (stepmother), underscoring the particularly offensive nature of the relationship due to classification as "inner-*οἶκος* adultery."⁹² Sibling language also factors into Paul's admonition. Reidar

89 Birge, *The Language of Belonging*, 70–71.

90 Wayne A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians*, Library of Early Christianity 6 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 129.

91 Helleman, *The Ancient Church as Family*, 106–8.

92 Joshua M. Reno, "Γυνή τοῦ Πατρός: Analytic Kin Circumlocution and the Case for Corinthian Adultery," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 135, no. 4 (2016): 828; Brian S. Rosner, "Temple and Holiness in 1 Corinthians 5," *Tyndale Bulletin* 42, no. 1 (1991): 141–44; H.H.D. Williams, *The Wisdom of the Wise: The Presence and Function of Scripture within 1 Cor. 1:18–3:23*, *Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums* 49 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 21–46. Reno concludes that the phrase *γυνή τοῦ πατρός* (his father's wife, 1 Cor. 5:1) should be read as a standard circumlocution rather than having reference to Pentateuchal usages of the phrase. An alternate view regarding the Pentateuchal usages has been well

Aasgaard indicates how the sibling language functions as a tool for constructing ingroup boundaries. For Paul, the immoral man was not truly a brother, nor worthy of the status of brother:

[T]he concept of false siblings functions as a disciplinary tool. By using it, Paul attempts to oust his competitors and non-conformers, and to deprive them of their power. Thus, the sibling metaphor plays a central part in Paul's language of separation, by which he intends to strengthen the Christians' sense of belonging to a qualitatively superior group.⁹³

Paul may have foreseen that unbelievers would misapply the kinship language as indicative of incestuous sexual relationships within the cultic practices of the *ecclesia*. Although our knowledge of pagan accusations of incest among Christ-followers does not date back to the first century,⁹⁴ in the view of antagonists, incestuous actions on the part of Christ-followers occurred between brothers and sisters subsequent to the celebration of the Eucharist, indicating a close connection between group identity and incest. The choices of the immoral man (in his incest) and the *ecclesia* (in its toleration) not only violated secular legal codes and religious moral standards but also chafed against the notion of kinship which shaped the identity of the *ecclesia*.

Paul appeals to kinship values in the Mediterranean culture of ancient Corinth through a robust utilization of familial metaphors throughout his correspondence. Jewish converts were well aligned to the value of lineage, heritage and ethnicity for identity, both corporate and individual. Gentile converts also held defined notions of how members of a household ought to relate to one another. DeSilva outlines the "ethos of kin"⁹⁵ in five distinct features: solidarity and cooperation, trust, harmony, hiding shame and forbearance with reconciliation.⁹⁶ In the context in which 1 Corinthians was written, recipients would have evaluated social constructs of kinship in a similar manner as described in the bounded conceptualizations of the social identity approach. Not only did appeal to the kinship metaphor present the *ecclesia* as a bounded entity that could be readily understood by outsiders, it simultaneously challenged notions of loyalty found in pagan writings. The level

argued by Rosner and buttressed by Williams. Nevertheless, the case put forth by Reno still reinforces the argument that gentile Christ-followers in Corinth would have perceived the immoral man as crossing boundaries within the *οἶκος*, thus demonstrating the importance of the kinship language for identity formation within the *ecclesia*.

93 Aasgaard, *My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!*, 302.

94 Philip F. Esler, *The Early Christian World* (London: Routledge, 2017), 547–48.

95 deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 165.

96 deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 165–73.

of ingroup loyalty required by Paul for fictive kinship (over and above actual blood relatives) would have greatly exceeded Roman expectations. Plutarch addresses the matter of love between brothers, using similar language as Paul. Nonetheless, he expects such loyalty to exist among actual kin whereas Paul expects this higher level of loyal intimacy to be present in the *ecclesia*. Second and third-century AD opponents of Christianity often cited this commitment to family as disruptive of traditional social norms, affirming that the loyalties of friendship are more appropriate to a grouping such as the *ecclesia*.⁹⁷ This distinctive use of kinship structures in social contexts which were not reflective of actual kinship structures demarcated a unique ethos for the *ecclesia*.

4 Conclusion

It has thus been observed that Paul conceived of the Corinthian Christ-followers as a distinct social group. His resolution to the situation of the immoral man in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 is replete with the language of social grouping. Paul implicitly engaged in social categorization through subordinate groupings, the language of group permeability, vernacular references to outsiders, the expectation of conformance to norms and social comparisons. The social expectations existent in an initiatory rite such as baptism underscore the revised group affiliation of Christ-followers. The use of kinship terminology and metaphors appeal to Mediterranean notions of bounded family units where honor should be carefully guarded. The bounded nature of Paul's conceptualization of the *ecclesia* is evidenced in numerous aspects of his correspondence. In answering the question as to why Paul was urgent and severe, this chapter demonstrates the ways in which the incest scenario could have threatened the entitativity of the *ecclesia*. The implicit framework of group boundedness from which Paul was operating created the possibility that the endorsement of the immoral man might place someone behaving as an outsider squarely in the midst of the ingroup. The reality and nature of this threat will be addressed in subsequent chapters, but here it can be seen that the implicit concept of group boundedness created the possibility for serious concern on the part of the apostle Paul.

97 Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians*, 129–30.

Pauline Emphasis of Ethics and Ethos

As the *ecclesia* incorporated Gentile believers, the notion of ethno-religious identity in Judaism faded as a viable framework for social distinction. Paul maintained the idea that the *ecclesia* ought to be socially distinct from pagan expressions of idolatrous worship; however, this liminal period of development surfaced a critical identity challenge for the *ecclesia*. The interstitial reality which eventuated in the Corinthian context led to Paul's use of ethical distinction for identity renegotiation. The immoral atmosphere of Corinth made possible the use of clearly defined sexual ethics as an effective tool for demarcating ingroup boundaries. This chapter addresses three pertinent aspects of the Corinthian context related to Paul's boundary demarcation. First, it commences with a discussion of the ways in which the *ecclesia* necessitated boundary definition by virtue of liminality in the context. Second, this chapter explains the moral ethos of first-century AD Corinth as a backdrop to Paul's call for moral purity to bring social definition to the *ecclesia*. Third, it describes the essentiality of ethical distinction in the Pauline framework of group boundedness as it relates to witness.

1 Liminality in Corinth

Much attention has been given to the discussion of the so-called parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity.¹ Perhaps the two most beneficial aspects of this academic dialogue have been 1) the recognition of how diversely the expressions of faith in Christ manifested across the Roman Empire and 2) the ways in which the overlap between Jews and Christ-followers was

1 James D.G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and Their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1991); Adam H. Becker and Annette Y. Reed, *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 95 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003). Dunn instigated the vocabulary, and thus the discussion. He provided numerous clarifications and qualifications along the way. The edited volume by Becker and Reed represents some of the challenging questions which needed to be addressed in relation to the discussion.

cross-cutting and complex.² First-century AD Jewish identity was not characterized by an abstraction of religious propositions or articles of faith.³ Steve Mason affirms that ancient religious constructs ought to be considered within the categories through which they were perceived in antiquity, where the modern notion of religion was conspicuously absent. Mason proposes six aspects of the Roman context which best describe the ways in which loyalty to a divinity would have been apprehended emically.⁴ The first relates to the *ethnos* of a people, which expressed in ancestral traditions, shared history, social norms and political structures. The political and ethnographic aspects of *ethnos* are not wholly religious; nevertheless, aspects of religiosity cannot be extracted from *ethnos*, especially for Judaism. Cult is a second aspect, for here the rituals and practices which characterize the beliefs are performed. A third aspect of loyalty to the divine might be located in *philosophia*, “a voluntary system of belief concerning ultimate things, especially the divine, matched by a regimen of practice ordering the life of the discipline, based in the study of authoritative written texts, and promoting clear ethical norms.”⁵ Within Judaism, Pharisees and Sadducees might fit this categorization of a *philosophia*. A fourth aspect could be described as rites and practices expressed domestically in kinship traditions, for example, when the Jewish family celebrated Passover. A fifth aspect was voluntary associations, which provided clear boundaries for affiliation. These groupings often exhibited cultic overtones or expressed loyalty to specific deities. Lastly, Mason invokes the supernatural spirituality found in astrology or magic as an aspect of Roman religious expression.

In sum, the ability within antiquity to categorize a person as an adherent to a specific ‘religion’ was inherently complex. Such a categorization possessed ethnic, social, cultic and philosophical dimensions. While ancients could at least identify Jews as a distinct grouping loyal to a particular divinity, figuring out how to categorize a Roman pagan who became a Christ-follower was far more complicated. The *ecclesia* was not rooted in a distinct *ethnos*. It exhibited components found in a *philosophia* and an association, though it was neither in any official sense. Elements of the Jewish cultic practice were appreciated, but even Jews limited many of their rites to the temple in Jerusalem. The domestic environment was quite important for the *ecclesia*, though the traditions there

2 Jens Schröter, Benjamin Edsall, and Joseph Verheyden, eds., *Jews and Christians—Parting Ways in the First Two Centuries CE?: Reflections on the Gains and Losses of a Model*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 253 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 3–5.

3 Steve Mason, “Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (2007): 480–81.

4 Mason, “Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism,” 483–88.

5 Mason, “Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism,” 486.

were still revised and renewed from their Jewish origins (e.g., the Lord's Supper as *eranos* feast in Corinth rather than sympotic Passover meal). Furthermore, Gentile inclusion into the *ecclesia* was not a clearly defined process. As noted by Jörg Frey,

For Paul the 'god-fearers model' of a 'second-class membership' is unacceptable; Gentile Christians (like the proselytes in the synagogue) should rather have an unrestricted participation in the congregation. But if this should not be possible without circumcision and obligation to obey the Torah, then there exists a new definition of the 'requirements for admission'. Paul justifies this soteriologically (the vicarious and salvific death of Jesus), pneumatologically (the manifestation of the Spirit to the uncircumcised) and exegetically (the promise came before the Law; believers are children of Abraham).⁶

To these factors might be added the confusion that Christ-followers from a Jewish heritage did not unilaterally cease attendance at synagogue or abandon halachic observance. Christ-followers from a gentile background likewise were still attending pagan temples—even if only to dine—and they were also remaining married to spouses whose divine allegiances lay elsewhere. Paul affirms that such continuation of identity in regard to believers' Jewish or gentile heritages (1 Cor. 7:10–11, 8:1–13, 9:19–23) is right and good.

Moreover, Christ-followers differed amongst themselves as to how they conceived of their own identity. Some perceived themselves as Jewish, following a Jewish Messiah, while others began to see following Christ as completely dissociated from Judaism. In between these two, especially in the early formation of Pauline communities, there were many who believed that “non-Jews could attach themselves to the Jewish *ethnos*, and become adopted without conversion (which would have involved circumcision for the men).”⁷ The *ecclesia* in Corinth was truly an “intercultural encounter”⁸ where the developing community brought Jews and pagans of varying persuasions together into a community which was complicated for insiders to define, much less outsiders.

This complexity of figuring out what it meant for someone to become a Christ-follower was further accentuated by the fact that the *ecclesia* defied

6 Jörg Frey, “The Jewishness of Paul,” in *Paul: Life, Setting, Work, Letters*, ed. Oda Wischmeyer (London: T&T Clark, 2012), 80.

7 Anders Runesson, “Inventing Christian Identity: Paul, Ignatius, and Theodosius I,” in *Exploring Early Christian Identity*, ed. Bengt Holmberg, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 226 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 73.

8 Smit, *Felix Culpa*, 77.

simple categorizations. The *ecclesia* cut across Roman society in terms of gender, status and *ethnos*, such that the communities which formed were a cross-section of society. The rules for social stratification present in the Roman context were inherently challenged by the diversity within the *ecclesia*, and this reality obfuscated boundary lines commonly utilized to develop ingroup distinctions in other contexts. The Pauline approach to gender, status and *ethnos* was characterized by a bifurcated perspective, which embraced certain practices accepted within Roman culture while simultaneously proposing radical new conceptualizations. This tactic of partial acceptance of prevailing norms combined with a challenge to ensconced cultural values greatly added to the difficulty of categorizing the *ecclesia* within the Roman social milieu.

1.1 Gender

Roman culture affirmed male prominence through characterization of masculinity by power, aggression and courage.⁹ Pragmatically, Roman culture emphasized domestic values for women such as marriage and child-rearing.¹⁰ The Corinthian *ecclesia* certainly demonstrated robust male governance. Personalities such as Apollos (1 Cor. 1:12, 3:4–9, 22 4:6, 16:12), Sosthenes (1 Cor. 1:1), Crispus and Gaius (1 Cor. 1:14), Stephanas (1 Cor. 1:16, 16:15–17) and Aquila (1 Cor. 16:19) indicate male leadership function within the *ecclesia*. Timothy is also closely connected to the Corinthian congregation, despite his origins in southern Galatia (1 Cor. 4:17, 16:10; 2 Cor. 1:1, 19).

While such emphasis on masculinity is predictably present, we also have indication of prominent roles for women within the Corinthian *ecclesia*. Chloe's household (1 Cor. 1:11) was strongly motivated to apply Paul's teaching in Corinth within the praxis of the *ecclesia*. Phoebe, though unmentioned by name in the Corinthian correspondence, is a well-regarded διάκονος (servant, Rom. 16:1) at the house church in Cenchrea and entrusted with Paul's correspondence to the Roman Christ-followers. Prisca is notably included with her husband as hosting a house church in Corinth (1 Cor. 16:19; cf. Acts 18:2–3).

Beyond the biographical data within the correspondence, Paul describes both genders as participants in the ritual and praxis of the *ecclesia*. Though the manner of participation differs by gender, both men and women are integral members of the congregation. For instance, men and women pray and

9 Alicia J. Batten, "Gender," in *The Ancient Mediterranean Social World: A Sourcebook*, ed. Zeba A. Crook (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2020), 141.

10 Carolyn Osiek and Jennifer Pouya, "Constructions of Gender in the Roman Imperial World," in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*, ed. Dietmar Neufeld and Richard E. DeMaris (London: Routledge, 2010), 44; Batten, "Gender," 143.

prophecy according to different modalities with regard to head coverings (1 Cor. 11:1–16). Both genders engage in the prescribed activities, despite the differentiation in how they participate.¹¹ Similarly, Paul notes the involvement of both men and women in the prophetic ministries of the *ecclesia* (1 Cor. 14:27–35).¹² Both genders displayed significant involvement in the *ecclesia*. In point of fact, it seems that the women in the Corinthian *ecclesia* were pushing out of stereotypical roles in a manner counter-cultural to Roman norms and at times against the wishes of the apostle Paul.¹³ Some appear to have been pursuing asceticism in their marriages (1 Cor. 7:4–5), contrary to the Roman notion of submission to male authority.¹⁴ Corinthian women were praying with their heads uncovered (1 Cor. 11:5–6), also distinctly contrary to normal Roman modalities of worship for women. Women were also speaking out in undesirable ways (1 Cor. 14:34–35), which may have resulted from confusion as to whether the gathering of believers was considered a private event in a home or a public venue.¹⁵

Paul's response to these challenges of Roman norms is marked by both acceptance and revision. Rather than resorting to the accepted narrative of women as rapaciously lacking sexual self-control, Paul describes the male and

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- 11 "Important is the fact that Paul is not arguing that men are superior to woman. In Christ there is no difference between men and woman since in Christ they share the same status (1 Cor 12:13). Paul does however acknowledge the fact that they do differ on an anthropological level. Said in another way, on a theological level man and woman are equal before God, but on a physical or anthropological level they are different, with the implication that in the social and anthropological context of the culture of Paul's day, they were to respect the particular social conventions." Kok, "Mission and Ethics in 1 Corinthians," 7.
 - 12 Marshall, *Women Praying and Prophesying in Corinth*, 157–219. Marshall correlates the instructions regarding gender specific head coverings with the prohibition against female speech in Corinth.
 - 13 Valérie Nicolet, "Creating a New Sex: Women Bodies in Conversion," in *The Complexity of Conversion: Intersectional Perspectives on Religious Change in Antiquity and Beyond*, ed. Valérie Nicolet and Marianne B. Kartzow, *Studies in Ancient Religion and Culture* (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2020), 152. Nicolet identifies the ways in which women revision themselves within the Corinthian *ecclesia*. Her proposal that women carved out space for themselves within the movement by reconceptualizing traditional categories of conversion is instructive. She does, however, describe the aspiring female converts as being in antipathy toward Paul—or more precisely, she describes Paul as being oppressive toward this burgeoning redefinition within the *ecclesia* by silencing them and veiling women. Although I share Nicolet's value for understanding conversion through a first-century sociological lens, I would not share her conclusions regarding gender oppression.
 - 14 Nicolet, "Creating a New Sex," 155–57.
 - 15 Margaret Y. MacDonald, "Early Christian Women Married to Unbelievers," in *A Feminist Companion to the Deutero-Pauline Epistles*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 18.

female both as potentially burning with lust. He does so with a third person plural verb which is presumably inclusive of both male and female: εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἐγκρατεύονται, γαμησάτωσαν (But if they do not have self-control, let them marry, 1 Cor. 7:9). Likewise, Paul does not suggest that women are only passive recipients of male sexual advances, but rather teaches that mutuality is ideal within the marriage: τῇ γυναικὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἀποδίδωτω, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ τῷ ἀνδρὶ (The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband., 1 Cor. 7:3). Nevertheless, Paul's affirmations of mutuality are carefully expressed to avoid misunderstanding by outsiders, as Romans had great suspicion for religious cults which drew women out of the privacy of the home and contributed to notions of sexual abstinence within marriage.¹⁶ In regard to prayer and prophecy within the congregation, Paul seems to allow more involvement from women than might be typical for a Roman context. However, he does so with a realization that clear role distinctions would have been important for the Roman outsider. Jorrun Økland documents the tendency for pagans in Corinth to approach their use of religious space similarly, in that both genders were allowed to be present, although their roles were highly contextualized by gender.¹⁷ The Corinthian *ecclesia* was inclusive of women in a manner which challenged Roman notions of gender while also expressing sensitivity toward cultural norms through partial conformance to gender expectations. This bifurcated approach on the part of the apostle Paul contributed to the liminality of identity and also reduced the utility of traditional Roman definitions for identity clarity.

1.2 *Status*

The Corinthian *ecclesia* also challenged Roman notions of identity by virtue of the inclusion of members from all strata of society. And if the inclusion was not enough, there was also an equalizing of authority. In the broader Roman social context, high-status individuals typically would have been dominant. Paul references the absence of many high-status individuals within the *ecclesia* in 1 Corinthians 1:26. Varying assessments have been given regarding Paul's acknowledgment that the *ecclesia* was comprised of οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα, οὐ πολλοὶ δυνατοί, οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς (not many wise according to the flesh, not many powerful and not many well-born, 1 Cor. 1:26). Deissmann placed

¹⁶ MacDonald, "Early Christian Women Married to Unbelievers," 22–27.

¹⁷ Jorrun Økland, *Women in Their Place: Paul and the Corinthian Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 78–130.

the Christ-follower movement among the lower classes of Roman society.¹⁸ Judge saw the social elite as having significant influence within the Christian movement.¹⁹ Meeks and Abraham Malherbe saw a cross-section of urban society represented within the *ecclesia*.²⁰ Justin J. Meggitt argued against this view in favor of understanding the *ecclesia* as almost exclusively comprised of those living at subsistence level.²¹ Theissen proposes the most likely explanation: "If Paul says that there were not many in the Corinthian congregation who were wise, powerful, and wellborn, then this much is certain: there were some."²²

Meeks' prosopographical approach may have its limitations in terms of scientific verifiability; nevertheless, it is likely the best we can do in approaching the topic of social status within the first-century *ecclesia*. He observes a propensity toward status inconsistency—believers were often in possession of earned wealth without having the attached social recognition typically accompanying such money.²³ The letter of 1 Corinthians identifies the status of several individuals within the *ecclesia*. Crispus was a synagogue leader (1 Cor. 1:14), a position of honor and perhaps wealth. Crispus, Stephanas and Chloe are each mentioned as being heads of household (1 Cor. 1:11, 14, 16; 11:22; 16:15). Gaius hosted Paul and also some gatherings in his home (Rom. 16:23). Titius Justus provided his home for Paul's use as well (Acts 18:7). Aquila and Prisca were merchants or artisans (1 Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:3; Acts 18:2). The *ecclesia* also had slaves, as can be noted by Paul's instruction to them regarding manumission (1 Cor. 7:21–23; cf. 12:13). Paul mentions a category τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας (those who have nothing, 1 Cor. 11:22) to represent the vast majority of believers who are οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς (not many well-born, 1 Cor. 1:26).²⁴

18 Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*, 6–8; Adolf Deissmann, "Primitive Christianity and the Lower Classes I," *The Expositor* 7, no. 2 (1909); Adolf Deissmann, "Primitive Christianity and the Lower Classes II," *The Expositor* 7, no. 3 (1909); Adolf Deissmann, "Primitive Christianity and the Lower Classes III," *The Expositor* 7, no. 4 (1909).

19 E.A. Judge, *Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First Century: Pivotal Essays by E.A. Judge*, ed. David M. Scholer (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2007), 137–56.

20 Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 72–73; Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 29–58.

21 Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*, Studies of the New Testament and its World (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998); see example of commonly expressed contrarian view in Dale B. Martin, "Justin J. Meggitt, Paul, Poverty and Survival," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 24, no. 2 (2001): 51–64.

22 Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 72; Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*, 118–21.

23 See also Bruce W. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 220.

24 N.T. Wright and Michael F. Bird, *The New Testament in its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan

Of course, vocation and wealth are not the only measures of social status. Education levels were also indicative of a person's standing, and the Corinthian correspondence indicates diversity in this regard as well.²⁵ In reality, status was mostly determined by the honor which was endemic to being born into certain families or acquiring wealth by inheritance. The system of patronage was a means by which resources that were unattainable by many might be conveyed more broadly. Patrons would offer financial assistance, but also credibility, influence and protection. In reciprocation, clients would offer their loyalty and service to the patron. Most importantly, they would become advocates for their patron's reputation in the community.²⁶ These patterns of patronage created a way of thinking which assumed "asymmetrical reciprocity."²⁷ An individual of lower social status would never exceed his superiors in status. This social order was embedded in virtually every aspect of Roman life, and it surfaces as a complicated matter for the *ecclesia* in regard to the Lord's Supper. Paul confronts the high-status Corinthians for excluding lower-status individuals from the meal (1 Cor. 11:17–22).²⁸ The apostle proposes "egalitarian reciprocity,"²⁹ where each person, regardless of status, offers his or her gifting to the group as a whole: εἴτε δοῦλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι, καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεῦμα ἐποτίσθημεν (whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:13).

This reordering of the social structure was discombobulating for the believers, but perhaps even more so for unbelievers who sought to understand the nature of the *ecclesia*. Nevertheless, as with gender roles, Paul does not abandon the patronage model altogether. In seeking to establish his authority in the Corinthian context, he presents himself as a patron to the Corinthian believers. Moreover, Paul conceived of the possibility that patronage could be effectively implemented within the *ecclesia* if the institution underwent some reforms. Bruce W. Winter has argued that Paul reenvisioned patronage in the cases of Stephanas and Phoebe to positive effect.³⁰ Paul's simultaneous maintenance and revision of social stratification would have challenged the Roman notion

Academic, 2019), 482. See here a very insightful graph of social statuses of individuals referenced in the New Testament in regard to Corinth.

25 Dutch, *The Educated Elite in 1 Corinthians*, 194–98.

26 Eric C. Stewart, "Social Stratification and Patronage in Ancient Mediterranean Societies," in Neufeld and DeMaris, *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*, 156–57.

27 Zeba A. Crook, "Patronage," in Crook, *The Ancient Mediterranean Social World*, 45.

28 Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity*, 147–151.

29 Elritia Le Roux, *Ethics in 1 Peter: The Imitatio Christi and the Ethics of Suffering in 1 Peter and the Gospel of Mark—a Comparative Study* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2018), 72.

30 Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 184–205.

of social order, which in turn would have made the task of creating clearly defined boundaries for the *ecclesia* more complex.

1.3 *Ethnicity*

The matter of ethnicity has been much discussed in recent decades of New Testament scholarship.³¹ Among these discussions is the consideration of whether ethnicity is a genetic phenomenon or a cultural one. Erich S. Gruen has convincingly argued that emic approaches to ethnicity demonstrate a cultural construct much more than a biological paradigm.³² Esler has developed a social scientific model for applying categories of ethnicity to New Testament criticism.³³ Based on Fredrik Barth's concepts, Esler's perspective aligns well with Gruen's in regard to the fluidity of culture as a mediator of ethnic identifications. Ethnicity has several features, the most prominent being a common myth of ancestry and territory, combined with a shared sense of solidarity.³⁴ Esler comments,

[N]o one feature can be determinative of, or a *sine qua non* for, ethnicity. In each case one needs to observe the nature of the boundaries that the group in question relies on to distinguish itself from other groups, sometimes using some of the above features and sometimes others, thus establishing the patterns of similarity and difference that allows its identity to persist.³⁵

Constructs of Jewish identity relied substantially on aspects of ethnicity for definition, just as did other groups within antiquity. Tucker views ethnic

31 David G. Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion: Religion, Race, and Whiteness in Constructions of Jewish and Christian Identities* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2020), 37–45, 56–65. In the process of building his case against prevailing notions of Judaistic exclusivism in contrast to ethnic inclusivity within Christianity, Horrell provides a detailed account of the development of ethnic constructs within social scientific criticism.

32 Erich S. Gruen, *Ethnicity in the Ancient World—Did It Matter?* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 5–7.

33 Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 40–76.

34 Teresa Morgan, "Society, Identity, and Ethnicity in the Hellenic World," in *Ethnicity, Race, Religion: Identities and Ideologies in Early Jewish and Christian Texts, and in Modern Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Katherine M. Hockey and David G. Horrell (London: T&T Clark, 2018), 23; Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans*, 43–44. Horrell also gives detailed analysis to these features with a view to how the *ecclesia* adopted similar ethnic constructs as Judaism. Horrell, *Ethnicity and Inclusion*, 95–248.

35 Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans*, 44.

identity as a subset of social identity.³⁶ The *ecclesia* needed to absorb multiple ethnicities into a cohesive whole. The Corinthian context hosted a great deal of commercial activity, which added to the ethnic diversity and cosmopolitan character of the city, partly from migrant populations of merchants and artisans.³⁷ Original inhabitants of a reconstituted Corinth in 44 BC likely hailed from Syria, Gaul, Egypt and Asia, in addition to some native Grecian areas.³⁸ The most notable interplay of ethnic entities in ancient Corinth is that of Greek and Roman. The city's recolonization brought Romans to the area, though they demonstrated some continuity with and appreciation of Corinth's Greek heritage. On the whole, Roman ethnicity overtook Greek influence, but both ethnicities were present in the Corinthian context.³⁹ Jews were also among the migrants who populated Corinth, likely having been a part of the original settlers, if not coming there as a result of expulsions from Rome in AD 19 and AD 49.

The ethnic contrast between Jews and Gentiles is the diversity that Paul addresses most forthrightly in his letter. Paul emphasizes the unity which surfaces from diversity (1 Cor. 12:4–7, 12–14), applying this to the difference between Jew and Gentile.⁴⁰ Paul describes the recipients of 1 Corinthians as ἔθνη (pagans, 1 Cor. 12:2), a distinctly ethnic term, arguably the cognate from which the term 'ethnic' is derived. Paul uses ἔθνος to distinguish between Jew and non-Jew. An examination of 1 Corinthians 1:22–24 shows that Paul conceived of diverse ethnic categories, inclusive of Ἰουδαῖοι and Ἕλληνες, yet the people in both these categories could also be believers: αὐτοῖς δὲ τοῖς κλητοῖς, Ἰουδαίοις τε καὶ Ἕλλησιν (but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, 1 Cor. 1:24). As noted by Caroline Johnson Hodge,

Although Paul superimposes another identity—'those who are called'—over the ethnic identities of *Ioudaios*, gentile and Greek, these ethnic identities do not disappear. Indeed, the implication of this passage is that one can be both a Greek (or gentile) and called, and one can be both a *Ioudaios* and called. Though Paul mostly focuses on Christ's relevance

36 Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*, 65.

37 Craig S. de Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts: The Relationships of the Thessalonian, Corinthian, and Philippian Churches with Their Wider Civic Communities*, Dissertation Series 168 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 185–86; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1–12.

38 Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts*, 186–87.

39 Benjamin W. Millis, "The Social and Ethnic Origins of the Colonists in Early Roman Corinth," in *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Daniel N. Schowalter and James C. Walters, *Supplements to Novum Testamentum* 134 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 34–36.

40 Concannon, 'When You Were Gentiles', 79–81.

for gentiles in his letters, here he speaks of *Ioudaioi* who are called as well. For Paul, being called or being in-Christ cuts across ethnic identities, including both *Ioudaioi* and non-*Ioudaioi*.⁴¹

As ἔθνη were incorporated into the *ecclesia*, the ethnic designations were no longer effective in identifying the group. Jewish identity was no longer efficacious, and neither was gentile identity. The new identity of believers was something completely different from an ethnic understanding. As argued by Esler and Mason,

Our research suggests that literate antiquity understood the Judaeans to be an ancient ethnos with a famous polis-patris and ancestral customs, or an ethnic group in modern parlance. Christ-followers, whether apocalyptically oriented or not, were different in kind and status. Encompassing members from various ethnic groups, they met in private houses or other buildings to worship their auctor, Christ, perhaps to prepare themselves for his imminent return. That new identity defined them completely and, according to knowledgeable ancient authors on all sides, overwrote their former ethnos-polis loyalties.⁴²

As with gender and status, Paul simultaneously worked within the cultural categories of his day while also challenging them. Paul did not obliterate ethnic identity, but rather reprioritized aspects of identity within a hierarchy of importance. Tucker provides four examples of this within 1 Corinthians: 1) Paul confronts over-prioritization of ethnic expressions as a causation for divisions within the *ecclesia* (1 Cor. 1:22–24), 2) Paul calls for a re-prioritization of ethnic expressions (circumcision or non-circumcision) in light of an ‘in-Christ’ identity (1 Cor. 7:18–20), 3) Paul encourages ethnic sensitivity toward both Jews and Greeks (1 Cor. 10:32) and 4) Paul calls for unity despite ethnic differences (1 Cor. 12:13).⁴³

The diversity in the *ecclesia* in regard to gender, socioeconomic status and ethnicity meant that the *ecclesia* could not be defined by the boundary marking features present within such superordinate identities. The ethnic-cultic-*philosophia*-association apparatus which had served Jewish sects in their search for social definition no longer capably assisted the newly emerging

41 Caroline E.J. Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 126.

42 Steve Mason and Philip F. Esler, “Judaean and Christ-Follower Identities: Grounds for a Distinction,” *New Testament Studies* 63 (2017): 515.

43 Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*, 80–81.

movement of Christ-followers. The diverse admixture of beliefs and backgrounds called for a redefinition of identity and boundary markers. This inability for Christ-followers to appropriate Roman perceptions of gender, status or *ethnos* in order to draw boundary markers for the *ecclesia* incentivized other modalities for ingroup distinction, namely boundary markers defined by ethics and ethos. Since previous approaches to identity, whether Jewish or Gentile, were inadequate for boundary demarcation, a new 'in-Christ' identity was required to delineate the *ecclesia* as an ingroup. Paul drew boundaries around this in-Christ identity by encouraging ethically distinguishable behavior. Paul viewed distinction from gentile paganism as paramount to the mission of the *ecclesia* as an agent of God in the world. In this regard, 1 Corinthians 5–7 are squarely situated within the letter, not as a discursive attempt to deal with matters about which members of the *ecclesia* inquired of Paul before he moved on to another set of vexing topics, but rather as Paul's attempt to define what it meant for the *ecclesia* to be distinct. Paul's emphasis on moral purity as a means of social distinction comes clear since the backdrop to his exhortation was the city of Corinth, a place with a historic reputation for immorality. The moral ethos of the Corinthian context is thus directly relevant to understanding 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 and Paul's concern for the reputation of the *ecclesia*.

2 Moral Ethos of Pagan Corinth

Perceptions of sexual excess in Corinth precede Paul's time by several centuries. The ancient lyricist Pindar (c.518–c.438) celebrated the victories of athletes in the Olympian, Pythian, Isthmian and Nemean games. His 13th Olympic Ode memorializes the athletic victory of Xenophon of Corinth for his competition in the footrace and pentathlon.⁴⁴ Accompanying the ode of Xenophon's victory is an additional fragment where he declares that he has given one hundred girls into the service of Aphrodite, poetically indicating that these girls would perform sexual acts as a ritual within the cult practices.⁴⁵ The ancient playwright Aristophanes (c.446–c.386 BC) defines the verb *κορίνθιαζεσθαι*,

44 Pind., *Ol.* 13.

45 Pind., *Frag.* 122. “καὶ οἱ ἰδιώται δὲ κατεύχονται τῇ θεῷ τελεσθέντων περὶ ὧν ἂν ποιῶνται τὴν δέησιν ἀπάξειν αὐτῇ καὶ τὰς ἑταίρας. ὑπάρχοντος οὖν τοῦ τοιοῦτου νομίμου περὶ τὴν θεὸν Ξενοφῶν ὁ Κορίνθιος ἐξιὼν εἰς Ὀλυμπίαν ἐπὶ τὸν ἀγῶνα καὶ αὐτὸς ἀπάξειν ἑταίρας εὖξατο τῇ θεῷ νικήσας.” Pindar, *Nemean Odes. Isthmian Odes. Fragments*, trans. William H. Race, Loeb Classical Library 485 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 361–63. “And private citizens (viz. in Corinth) promise the goddess (Aphrodite) that if their prayers are answered they will even dedicate prostitutes to her. Since such a custom existed

linking it with the terms ἑταίρειν (to be a prostitute) and μαστροπεύειν (to pimp).⁴⁶ Plato (c.424–c.348 BC) employed the term Κορινθία κόρη to describe a prostitute in *Republic*.⁴⁷ Philetaerus (c.343–c.263 BC, though the reference is extant in Athenaeus from the third century AD) entitled his play *Κορινθιαστῆς*, portraying Corinth as a place of sexual revelry.⁴⁸ Strabo's famed reference to a thousand temple prostitutes in Corinth comes much closer to Paul's time.⁴⁹ This ancient reputation for immorality and vice carried into the first century AD and has been ubiquitously emphasized in modern commentary literature.⁵⁰

Since the assessment of Corinth as an especially immoral city has been questioned by some scholars, it is critical to examine the evidence in this regard. The argument against these perceptions runs along two lines. First, pejorative descriptions may have been used as anti-Corinthian propaganda. The unflattering nature of the literary references may reflect author bias more than the historical reality in Corinth. Second, there is a significant gap between Greek Corinth and Roman Corinth. The references in Pindar, Plato, Aristophanes and Philetaerus are removed from Paul's time by centuries. Corinth was destroyed by Lucius Mummius in 146 BC, and it was not until 44 BC that Julius Caesar reestablished the city via colonization. While the region was still sparingly populated in the interim period, civic life was non-existent. Temples fell into disrepair and were rededicated in the Roman era, typically with some revisions in both architectural design and cultic ritual. The Temple of Aphrodite

concerning the goddess, Xenophon of Corinth, when setting out for the Olympic games, promised the goddess that if he won he would dedicate prostitutes to her."

46 Ar., *Frag.* 370. "κορινθιάζομαι: τὸ ἑταίρειν, ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν Κορίνθῳ ἑταίρων, ἢ τὸ μαστροπεύειν" Aristophanes, *Fragments*, trans. Jeffrey Henderson, Loeb Classical Library 502 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 286. "To 'play the Corinthian' is to consort with prostitutes, from the prostitutes of Corinth, or to be a procurer."

47 Pl., *Resp.* 404d.

48 Ath. 7.313c, 13.559a.

49 Strab. 8.6.20.

50 Though unpublished in peer-reviewed sources, after reviewing personal correspondence of famed archaeologist Oscar Broneer, Dallas DeForest speculates that communication with American media outlets regarding the immorality of Corinth was intended to instigate religious tourism. Articles to this effect were published in Time Magazine and the New York Times in the 1950's. This may have been a contributing factor to the unwitting acceptance of the reputation of Corinth as an 'ancient Las Vegas' in the modern commentary tradition. See Dallas DeForest, "The Oscar Broneer Papers and the Image of Corinth," accessed August 4, 2020, <https://mediterraneanpalimpsest.wordpress.com/2011/10/09/the-oscar-broneer-papers-and-the-image-of-corinth>. For a nuanced discussion of how the question of Strabo's historicity relates to the broader matter of sexual practices in Corinth, see Mary Beard and John Henderson, "Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity," in *Gender and the Body in the Ancient Mediterranean*, ed. Maria Wyke (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 56–79; Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 56–57.

was constructed from the ground up in the Roman era, with just traces of the Greek version evident in the archaeological finds.⁵¹ The original excavations on the Acrocorinth revealed minimal data. Conclusions regarding the Temple of Aphrodite were drawn from a compilation of archaeological remains and the accounts of Strabo and Pausanias.⁵² Pausanias postdates Paul by 100 years and, as will be seen, Strabo's accuracy has been questioned. Thus, it is entirely possible that Carl Blegen's excavation report should be taken with a sense of critical appraisal.

In particular, it is Strabo's direct reference to temple prostitution in Corinth which has been most challenged by scholars. Conzelmann argued that Strabo's thousand prostitutes actually came from the golden era of Corinth rather than the Roman Imperial era when the author visited.⁵³ Others have followed Conzelmann's lead in this regard. Strabo's reference to sacral prostitution is situated within his proposition that Corinth is a wealthy city. He first appeals to the geography of Corinth as an isthmus. To avoid shipwreck around the Peloponnese, land portage was necessitated. The resulting *diolkos* opened up doors of commerce and income. This idea of the *diolkos* being a source of commerce and income was not new to Strabo but had already been put forth by Thucydides in the fifth century BC, among other mentions.⁵⁴ N.M. Verdelis dated the earliest version of the *diolkos* to the period of Periander in the seventh century BC.⁵⁵ Strabo's initial example of Corinth's wealth reaches far back into the history of the city. This is also the case with Strabo's second example, the Isthmian games, which commenced in 582 BC even though their mythic origins were earlier. Strabo continues this argument regarding Corinth's wealth

51 Christine M. Thomas, "Greek Heritage in Roman Corinth and Ephesos: Hybrid Identities and Strategies of Display in the Material Record of Traditional Mediterranean Religions," in Friesen, Schowalter and Walters, *Corinth in Context*, 119–23; Nancy Bookidis, "Religion in Corinth: 146 B.C.E. to 100 C.E.," in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. Daniel N. Schowalter and Steven J. Friesen (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 147, 160–161.

52 Carl W. Blegen et al., *Corinth Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Acrocorinth Excavations in 1926*, 3 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), 18–21.

53 Conzelmann, MacRae, and Leitch, *1 Corinthians*, 12; Hans Conzelmann, *Korinth und die Mädchen der Aphrodite: zur Religionsgeschichte der Stadt Korinth* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 247–61.

54 David K. Pettegrew, "The Diolkos and the Emporium: How a Land Bridge Formed the Commercial Economy of Roman Corinth," in *Corinth in Contrast: Studies in Inequality*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Sarah A. James and Daniel N. Schowalter, *Supplements to Novum Testamentum* 155 (Lieden: Brill, 2014), 126–27.

55 N.M. Verdelis, "Der Diolkos am Isthmus von Korinth," *Mitteilungen des deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung* 71 (1956): 51–59.

by describing the Corinthian dynasties of the Bacchiadae (eighth/seventh centuries BC), Cypselus (seventh century BC) and Demaratus Cypselus (seventh century BC), emphasizing particular personalities and the immense capital they wielded. It is at this point in his narrative that he references the temple of Aphrodite. As with the previous points, his literary purpose in referring to the cult of Aphrodite is to emphasize Corinth's wealth:

τό τε τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἱερὸν οὕτω πλούσιον ὑπῆρξεν, ὥστε πλείους ἢ χιλίας ἱεροδούλους ἐκέκτητο ἑταίρας, ἃς ἀνετίθεσαν τῇ θεῷ καὶ ἄνδρες καὶ γυναῖκες. καὶ διὰ ταύτας οὖν πολυωχλεῖτο ἡ πόλις καὶ ἐπλουτίζετο· οἱ γὰρ ναύκληροι ῥαδίως ἐξανηλίσκοντο, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἡ παροιμία φησὶν· οὐ παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἐς Κόρινθον ἔσθ' ὁ πλοῦς. καὶ δὴ καὶ μνημονεύεται τις ἑταίρα πρὸς τὴν ὀνειδίζουσαν, ὅτι οὐ φιλεργὸς εἶη οὐδ' ἐρίων ἄπτοίτο, εἰπεῖν· “ἐγὼ μέντοι ἡ τοιαύτη τρεῖς ἡδὴ καθεῖλον ἱστὺς ἐν βραχεὶ χρόνῳ τούτῳ.”⁵⁶

There is no reason within the text to suggest that Strabo is suddenly vaulting from the eighth and seventh centuries BC to the first century AD in his examples of Corinth's historic wealth. It is more likely that he references the reputed practice of sacral prostitution as an example of Corinth's ancient wealth.

This, of course, surfaces the matter of whether the sacral prostitution was a historical actuality or a mythical figment of the collective imagination. Stephanie Lynn Budin argues that Strabo's vocabulary is misunderstood by modern interpreters and that he did not intend to imply sacral prostitution in his reference to Corinth.⁵⁷ John R. Lanci notes that Strabo likely sourced his information in Herodotus, which brings into relief the potential of uncritical exaggeration in Strabo's account.⁵⁸ Moreover, Lanci adds that the association of cultic prostitution with Aphrodite is more closely connected with the Greek version of the goddess as a warrior than the more sexualized and

56 Strab. 8.6.20. “And the temple of Aphrodite was so rich that it owned more than a thousand temple-slaves, courtesans, whom both men and women had dedicated to the goddess. And therefore it was also on account of these women that the city was crowded with people and grew rich; for instance, the ship-captains freely squandered their money, and hence the proverb, ‘Not for every man is the voyage to Corinth.’ Moreover, it is recorded that a certain courtesan said to the woman who reproached her with the charge that she did not like to work or touch wool: ‘Yet, such as I am, in this short time I have taken down three webs.’” Strabo, *Geography, Volume IV: Books 8–9*, trans. Horace Leonard Jones, Loeb Classical Library 196 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), 191.

57 Stephanie L. Budin, *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 153–209.

58 John R. Lanci, “The Stones Don’t Speak and the Texts Tell Lies: Sacred Sex at Corinth,” in Schowalter and Friesen, *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth*, 213–14.

domesticated Roman version where cultic prostitution would be unneeded in the first-century AD religious context.⁵⁹

The excavations of the Roman Acrocorinth themselves did not show evidence of cultic prostitution. The size of the temple was surprisingly small given Strabo's description of the activity therein.⁶⁰ The presence of the Aphrodite cult in Corinth was also evaluated in later excavations closer to the city itself, in the area to the east of the theater. Charles K. Williams asserts that the prominence of the cult of Aphrodite is quite evident in this lower portion of the city during the Roman era; however, he cautions that it does not immediately follow that prostitution was also prominent. The buildings do not demonstrate typical evidence of prostitution, such as small, segmented rooms or the formations of an inn.⁶¹ Nancy Bookidis conjectures that the statuary of Aphrodite common in the Roman era indicates that prostitution on the Acrocorinth may have been a relic of the Greek era and not replicated in Roman times.⁶² In short, if Strabo is asserting that sacral prostitution existed in his own time, the archaeological record does not necessarily support such a conclusion. If Strabo was appealing to sacral prostitution of a previous era, his argumentation would fit the extant data more closely.

This conclusion would mean that Strabo's description of Corinth is not indicative of Paul's Corinth in the mid-first century AD. However, the data from Strabo ought not to be dismissed too quickly as insidiously deceptive—or for that matter, irrelevant. Even if it is convincingly demonstrated that Strabo does not describe Corinth in Paul's time, his reference to sacral prostitution, whether factual or not, documents a first-century reputational perception that sacral prostitution had existed and contributed to Corinth's wealth. Strabo appealed to a notion commonly agreed upon by his audience, even if he was referencing a phenomenon to which he was not personally observant. Strabo's reference confirms that the longstanding reputation for immorality in Corinth remained in the first century. Two terms employed by Strabo in this passage demonstrate that he was appealing to a common perception: *παροιμία* and *μνημονεύω*. First, Strabo introduces the adage “not for every man is the voyage to Corinth” as *παροιμία*, a term which indicates a common saying or proverb. This word may imply a pithy truism, used regardless of the statement's factuality. This indicates that Strabo himself may have viewed sacral prostitutes as

59 Lanci, “The Stones Don't Speak and the Texts Tell Lies,” 218–20.

60 Lanci, “The Stones Don't Speak and the Texts Tell Lies,” 205; Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 55–58, 144–147; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 34–35.

61 Charles K. Williams II, “Roman Corinth: The Final Years of Pagan Cult Facilities along East Theater Street,” in Schowalter and Friesen, *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth*, 244–45.

62 Bookidis, “Religion in Corinth: 146 B.C.E. to 100 C.E.,” 160–61.

lore rather than fact, yet the perception nonetheless documents his point that the city was enriched by commerce.⁶³ Second, Strabo describes an interaction between a woman and a temple slave using the term *μνημονεύω*, in the sense of calling to mind or remembering.⁶⁴ This term likewise appeals to acceptance of a common lore, a social memory in Corinth. While the historicity of cultic prostitution in first-century AD Corinth may be rightfully questioned, it is an overreaction to dismiss the Corinthian reputation of immorality as mere exaggeration. Corinth was a location of actualized and especial immorality, and the reputation of such is evidence in and of itself.⁶⁵

The conclusion offered in regard to Strabo is bolstered by Plutarch's reference to a τῶν ἐταίρων μέγαν στρατὸν⁶⁶ in Corinth. His proximity to Corinth in the time of Paul is quite helpful in understanding the nature of the situation when the Corinthian correspondence was written. The philosopher and biographer was born c. AD 46, approximately a decade before Paul's initial sojourn in Corinth. He resided in Chaeronea, just across the Gulf of Corinth and to the east of Delphi. Plutarch travelled to Corinth multiple times, providing descriptions of the city from the latter half of the first century AD.⁶⁷ Plutarch, like Strabo, appears to be describing events of an earlier period, but he nonetheless documents the reputation of the city as it was perceived in the mid-first century AD.

The apostle Paul's own mention of prostitution in Corinth also ought to be given proper weight as well. Paul addressed the temptation for Christ-followers to engage with prostitutes in Corinth (1 Cor. 6:15–20). Even if Paul's reference relates to the temptation rather than actual engagement on the part of Christ-followers, he provides evidence that prostitution was readily accessible in the city. Rosner argues that the first-century Corinthian prostitution noted by Paul is something other than sacral activity in the cult of Aphrodite; nevertheless, some form of prostitution was embedded in Corinthian culture and potentially practiced by Christ-followers. He traces the association of prostitution with festivals and commemorative gatherings. In particular, he notes the

63 TDNT 5:854.

64 TDNT 4:682–3.

65 See also Renate Kirchhoff, *Die Sünde gegen den eigenen Leib: Studien zu pornē and porneia in 1 Kor 6, 12–20 und dem sozio-kulturellen Kontext der paulinischen Adressaten*, Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments 18 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 84–90; Zeller, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 32–33.

66 Plut., *Mor. Amat.* 9.768a. “a great army of harlots” Plutarch, *Moralia, Volume IX: Table-Talk, Books 7–9. Dialogue on Love*, trans. Edwin L. Minar, F.H. Sandbach, and W.C. Helmbold, Loeb Classical Library 425 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 421. The textual variant should be noted in the analysis of Plutarch's statement.

67 Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 104–12.

Pauline exhortation for believers: μηδὲ εἰδωλολάτραι γίνεσθε καθὼς τινες αὐτῶν, ὥσπερ γέγραπται· ἐκάθισεν ὁ λαὸς φαγεῖν καὶ πεῖν καὶ ἀνέστησαν παίζειν (Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play,’ 1 Cor. 10:7). He connects festal dining with sexual play from the times of the Jewish wanderings in Exodus.⁶⁸

What is clear from the historical record is that sexual practices which would have been classified as immoral by any Jew, Paul included, were regular fare for Roman Corinthians. The modern commentary tradition is replete with descriptions of sacral prostitutes in the cult of Aphrodite as an illustration of the deeply embedded immorality of the city. The facts regarding first-century AD sacral prostitution may be amiss, yet that which is ultimately conveyed is, in a sense, quite accurate. Corinth remained a city with a reputation for accessible πορνεία. The Corinthian correspondence was written to gentile converts who were evaluating the implications of their newfound faith. Some Corinthian Christ-followers had misunderstood what was morally permissible in light of the pervasive acceptance of immorality in pagan practices. Through multiple allusions to the Jewish traditions, Paul argues that the sexual mores of the Hebrew scriptures are vividly relevant to the faith practice of Christ-followers. In point of fact, moral purity provided a means by which the *ecclesia* could be differentiated from pagans.

3 Ethical Distinction and Sensitivity to Outsiders

The “canon of institutionalized practices”⁶⁹ found within a group can be identified as the ethos of that group. The behaviors incorporated within an ethos are not in need of constant evaluation, as they are mutually accepted by the group as reflections of the ethics of the group. It is the ethos which contributes to the identity of a group. The behavior which evinces from a specific ethos is unmistakable, unambiguous and repeatable.⁷⁰ It is the ability for this ethos to be recognizable that causes it to contribute to identity. As articulated by Elritia Le Roux in regard to the *ecclesia*,

68 Brian S. Rosner, “Temple Prostitution in 1 Corinthians 6:12–20,” *Novum Testamentum* 40, no. 4 (1998): 347–51; Paul D. Weaver, “Ancient Corinth, Prostitution, and 1 Corinthians 5–7,” *Journal of Ministry & Theology* 19, no. 1 (2015): 116–55.

69 Wolter, “Let No One Seek His Own, but Each One the Other’s” (1 Corinthians 10, 24),” 200.

70 Wolter, *Theologie und Ethos im frühen Christentum*, 128.

These communities should be defined by their distinctive “Christian” behavior and so their identity as Christians will become established. This identity has an internal as well as an external function. Internally, it provides a code of conduct among their fellow Christians and externally it disassociates them from the rest of the society and at the same time provides an established norm for engaging with the outside world.⁷¹

The exclusivity demarcated by a particular ethos within a group becomes a boundary marker by which the outgroup is distinguished from the ingroup. Here the theological analysis of Pauline writings intersects with the sociological material in a social identity approach. Paul’s ethics and the ethos which he encouraged within the Corinthian *ecclesia* are directly relevant to understanding the social realities of ingroup identity.⁷² An example from 1 Thessalonians 4:3–4 illustrates how Paul substitutes ethical boundaries for ethnic boundaries as he differentiates ingroup from outgroup. Though he is writing to a gathering composed primarily or exclusively of Gentiles, “Paul’s language separates them from their ethnic origins, thereby assuming a completely distinct identity for Christians with differences in morality being used to demarcate one of the boundaries between the readers and their former identity as Gentiles who did not know God.”⁷³ Paul commands ἀπέχεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς πορνείας ... μὴ ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας καθάπερ καὶ τὰ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ εἰδότα τὸν θεόν (abstain from sexual immorality ... not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God, 1 Thess. 4:3, 5). Paul demarcated boundaries for the *ecclesia* by virtue of paraenetic expectations rather than ethnic identity. Understanding the role of paraenesis and the anticipated development of distinct ethos in the Corinthian context is critical to appraising Paul’s bounded conceptualization of the *ecclesia*. Paul was urgent and severe because acceptance of the immoral

71 Le Roux, *Ethics in 1 Peter*, 71.

72 Esler, *Galatians*, 45; John A. Dunne, “Cast Out the Aggressive Agitators (Gl 4:29–30): Suffering, Identity, and the Ethics of Expulsion in Paul’s Missions to the Galatians,” in Kok et al., *Sensitivity towards Outsiders*, 247; Andrie Du Toit, “Sensitivity towards the Reaction of Outsiders as Ethical Motivation in Early Christian Paraenesis,” in Kok et al., *Sensitivity towards Outsiders*, 341–42. Esler equates ethics with norms, although he makes a few pertinent clarifications. At times, New Testament scholars treat ethics as if they are extractable phenomena rather than contextualized realities. Esler’s critique is not accurate of all approaches to ethics, but stands as a valid critique of some. In this sense, the concept of a norm within the social identity approach describes an ethical standard in a Pauline community more accurately as a contextualized reality, acknowledged by a group in a specific context.

73 Charles A. Wanamaker, “Apocalyptic Discourse, Paraenesis and Identity Maintenance in 1 Thessalonians,” *Neotestamentica* 36, 1–2 (2002): 138.

man fought against the ethos which he viewed as essential for distinguishing the *ecclesia* from unbelievers.

3.1 *Paraenetical Exhortation Brings Ingroup Definition*

Appeal to ethical constraints as a means of clarifying ingroup boundaries was a practice with some precedent in Jewish sects of the Second Temple period. The Pharisaical sect appealed to halachic conformance as a defining feature. The Essenes utilized ritual washings and asceticism. The Zealots embraced political values which resulted in the justification of violence as a means of distinguishing their sect from others. Paul likely did not see himself as making a clean break with Judaism, but rather he positioned the *ecclesia* as a sect within Judaism which provisioned for Gentile inclusion. The inclusion of Gentiles into the *ecclesia* has a template in the proselytization of Gentiles into Judaism.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the process by which Gentiles would be included in the *ecclesia* was still in need of immense definition in the formative years of the *ecclesia*. This was an ongoing process of identity negotiation marked by varying priorities and practices in different cities within the empire—at times variation existed even within the same congregation. As Jacobus Kok and Dieter T. Roth note:

As a ‘new’ movement, early Christ-followers had to construct their identity and social boundaries. Group identity construction is a gradual process that is extended over time and space and one that is always in a dialogical relationship with others. ... Part of constructing identity and a distinct sense of self entails the creation of inclusive and exclusive boundary markers. Inclusive boundary markers are shared with the rest of society and keep the group integrated with its *Umwelt*. Exclusive boundary markers refer to the distinctive ethos of the group that distinguishes it from outsiders and strengthens group identity for insiders.⁷⁵

Becoming a Christ-follower was associated with certain lifestyle standards from the onset. Accounting for the history of scholarship in defining paraenesis, Young Chul Whang concludes that an adequate definition of paraenesis must reflect ingroup association: “paraenesis can best be described as an

74 Shaye J. Cohen, “Crossing the Boundary and Becoming a Jew,” *Harvard Theological Review* 82, no. 1 (1989): 13–33.

75 Kok and Roth, “Sensitivity toward Outsiders and the Dynamic Relationship between Mission and Ethics/Ethos,” 5.

exhortation to build and sustain a community, i.e. the Church [*sic*].⁷⁶ In fact, Whang emphasizes this point even more emphatically by saying it “would not be too much to say that community building should function as a guiding principle in the interpretation of Pauline paraenesis.”⁷⁷ Pauline paraenesis seeks to form a cohesive ingroup identity by shaping the ethical standards of the community. As noted by Richard B. Hays,

[Paul’s] exhortations are aimed at defining and maintaining a corporate identity for his young churches, which are emphatically countercultural communities. Thus, his letters should be read primarily as instruments of community formation. Their rhetoric consistently aims at reinforcing group cohesion and loyalty within the community of faith.⁷⁸

Paraenesis appeals to an ethical standard that is already known,⁷⁹ which explains the many occasions when Paul appeals to halachic standards or why he might refer to πατέρες ἡμῶν (our fathers, 1 Cor. 10:1) when addressing a gentile audience. Paraenetic exhortations are typically accompanied by an example which the recipients of the exhortation can imitate.⁸⁰ As noted earlier, Paul offers himself as a person worthy of imitation (1 Cor. 4:16, 11:1).⁸¹

Paraenetic language draws distinctions between ingroup and outgroup by virtue of terminology. Outgroup members are described as ἄδικοι (unrighteous, 1 Cor. 6:9). Enumerated among the unrighteous—first, in fact—are πόρνοι

76 Young C. Whang, “Paul’s Letter Paraenesis,” in *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Sean A. Adams, *Pauline Studies* 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 262. Not all approaches to paraenesis emphasize community shaping aspects in such a thoroughgoing manner. See a helpful history of scholarship in regard to paraenesis in the chapter entitled “Historical Phases within the Academic Study of Paraenesis” in Philip L. Tite, *Valentinian Ethics and Paraenetic Discourse: Determining the Social Function of Moral Exhortation in Valentinian Christianity*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 67 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 58–107. Also of note is Aasgaard’s critical evaluation of the less explicit language related to community in the Oslo-Lund definitions: “[A] proper understanding of New Testament paraenesis should also involve the element of a shared identity.” Reidar Aasgaard, “‘Brotherly Advice’: Christian Siblingship and New Testament Paraenesis,” in *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context*, ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen and James Starr, *Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 125 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004), 265.

77 Whang, “Paul’s Letter Paraenesis,” 260.

78 Richard B. Hays, “Ecclesiology and Ethics in 1 Corinthians,” *Ex Auditu* 10 (1994): 31–32.

79 Abraham J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook*, Library of Early Christianity 4 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 125.

80 Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 125.

81 Williams, “Imitate Me,” 89–91; Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference*, 225–27.

(fornicators, 1 Cor. 6:9), who will not inherit the kingdom of God.⁸² Paul designates the immoral man as an outsider by virtue of his violation of the ethos of the congregation. The *ecclesia* is to avoid fellowship with the man due to his status as πόρνος (immoral person, 1 Cor. 5:11). Paul clarifies his status change from insider to outsider by labelling him ἀδελφός ὀνομαζόμενος (so-called brother, 5:11), meaning that the man has identified with the *ecclesia* as an ingroup member; nevertheless, his self-designation is inaccurate. A truthful appraisal justifies a reclassification of the man, which in turn requires the *ecclesia* to apply different standards of relationship. Presumably, the relationship with the man would be newly construed in a manner similar to any relationship between a Christ-follower and an unbeliever—contact was allowed or encouraged, yet such association must not pollute the *ecclesia* through the invasive presence of sin⁸³ nor dilute the witness of the *ecclesia* by creating identity confusion.⁸⁴ If the man were to leave behind his immoral choices, the *ecclesia* would no longer be creating identity confusion for outsiders by his situation. Since this option is not likely, the next step is removal from the fellowship. Had the *ecclesia* mourned the sin of the man, he might have left of his own accord.⁸⁵ Since he remains, it is vital that the *ecclesia* disassociates from him, lest the outsider characteristic of πόρνος be perceived as an acceptable moral standard for insiders in the *ecclesia*.

3.2 *Norm Conformance as Means of Witness*

The moral distinctiveness developed by Christ-followers was a part of the “dynamic relationship between mission and ethics in early Christianity.”⁸⁶ As Paul addressed the Corinthian situation, he was profoundly concerned about the moral ethos of the *ecclesia*. These paraenetic expectations functioned, not merely for the sake of purity or ingroup definition, but for the ultimate outcome of witness.⁸⁷ Tucker has emphasized the components of a “mission

82 Du Toit, “Sensitivity towards the Reaction of Outsiders as Ethical Motivation in Early Christian Paraenesis,” 342–44. Du Toit offers further evidence of the robust use of ἔξω/ἔξωθεν as an outsider designation, not only in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 but in numerous other places. Additionally, he notes use of ἄνθρωπος, λοιπός, and ἕθνος as outsider terms specifically in paraenetic contexts.

83 Dale B. Martin, *Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 168–74.

84 May, *The Body for the Lord*, 59–62.

85 Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 388.

86 Kok and Roth, “Sensitivity toward Outsiders and the Dynamic Relationship between Mission and Ethics/Ethos,” 10.

87 Du Toit, “Sensitivity towards the Reaction of Outsiders as Ethical Motivation in Early Christian Paraenesis,” 351–53. Paraenetic texts possess simultaneously an inward and an

as social identification”⁸⁸ as 1) avoiding offense to outsiders (1 Cor. 10:32), 2) making adjustments which prompt questions (1 Cor. 10:28), 3) revising worship gatherings with sensitivity to outsider perceptions (1 Cor. 14:23) and 4) remaining in good relational standing with outsiders (1 Cor. 5:9–10). The result of living in such a way as to maintain witness was noticeable. As Ben Witherington III writes,

[T]he demanding ethic found in the New Testament is an ingroup ethic, an ethic for a specific community ... It certainly was not an ethic anyone was trying or could try to impose on non-Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles. And some aspects of this ethic, when carefully adhered to, would make this community stand out like a sore thumb in some ways, but apparently it also made that community incredibly winsome in other ways, particularly because of its love ethic and the great generosity and kindness that characterized the early Christian cell groups.⁸⁹

Paul established norms with the intention of being sensitive to the perceptions of outsiders for the sake of witness. The whole of 1 Corinthians might be considered “the richest example of Christian parenesis that survives from the first century,”⁹⁰ and within this letter might be found Paul’s concern for witness from beginning to end.

Paul advocated for an ethos which kept the witness of the *ecclesia* at the forefront of his argumentation. The reception of the gospel in Corinth was confirmed by virtue of a μαρτύριον (testimony, 1 Cor. 1:6). The gospel is perceived as foolishness to the unbeliever, therefore the preaching of the gospel must not be reliant on human wisdom (1 Cor. 1:18–31, 2:5). The implication of 1 Corinthians 1:17 is that the divisions surrounding baptism are prohibiting the successful proclamation of the gospel in Corinth. The issue of divisions is contextualized within the topic of how the *ecclesia* relates to outsiders since the congregation was the purveyor of the gospel message. Further along in the letter, Paul expresses his concern over what Gentiles would think of an incestuous

outward focus. Du Toit helpfully articulates that it is advantageous to speak of the centrifugal and centripetal trajectories as primary/secondary rather than binary.

88 Tucker, *Reading 1 Corinthians*, 73.

89 Ben Witherington, *New Testament Theology and Ethics*, 2 vols., 2 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 602.

90 Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians*, 130.

man (1 Cor. 5:1). Paul also expresses dismay over the Corinthians' misapplication of his previous admonition regarding unbelievers (1 Cor. 5:9–10).⁹¹

Purification from polluting influences was not intended to preclude witness by virtue of cutting off contact with unbelievers. It was intended to enhance witness by virtue of boundary maintenance. Paul is concerned about the negative witness of believers taking each other to court (1 Cor. 6:6). Since ancient litigation involved legitimate besmirching of an opponent's character as a rhetorical and legal strategy, the juridical context was rife with potential misunderstanding regarding the norms of the *ecclesia* on the part of outsiders. Paul is concerned about the testimony that a believer has in the household with an unbelieving spouse (1 Cor. 7:14). Paul also indicates his preference for singleness, which is an implicit expression of concern for witness as well. Paul says that marriage ought to be avoided if possible in light of the coming distress. This impending situation likely refers to future persecution where the marital or parental relationship would make it more complicated to experience martyrdom (1 Cor 7:26–35). Paul itemizes the ways in which he sets aside his rights in order to be more effective in making Christ known to the unbeliever (1 Cor. 9:16–27). He uses the verbs κερδαίνω (win, 1 Cor. 9:19–22) and σώζω (save, 1 Cor. 9:22) to describe the goal of his flexibility. He instructs believers on how to respond to the invitation to dine from an unbeliever if idol meat might be served, with explicit concern for the witness involved (1 Cor. 10:27–33).

In the matter of the Eucharist, there is another implicit reference to outsider perception. Paul says κρινόμενοι δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου παιδεύομεθα, ἵνα μὴ σὺν τῷ κόσμῳ κατακριθῶμεν (when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world, 1 Cor. 11:32). While this may reference the situation of the immoral man who was given over to Satan or any other person who had been removed from the protective covering of Christ, it also expresses the possibility that unbelievers may notice the death of believers and connect that with the situation in the *ecclesia*. Further on, the speaking in tongues and prophesying is directly connected to witness. Unbelievers are likely to misperceive the ecstatic utterances as being reflective

91 "Paulus weist die korinthische Gemeinde nicht an, sich in die Isolation zu begeben und im christlichen Ghetto zu leben. Für die kleinen Gemeinden im 1. Jahrhundert wäre dies wahrscheinlich auch gar nicht möglich gewesen, zumal der missionarische Auftrag der Gemeinde durch einen Rückzug untergraben würde (in den Evangelien wird die Gemeinschaft der Jesusbekenner mit einem Fischerboot verglichen, nicht mit einer Arche!)." [Paul is not instructing the Corinthian church to go into isolation and live in the Christian ghetto. For the small congregations in the first century, this would probably not have been possible at all, especially since the missionary task of the congregation would be undermined by a retreat (in the Gospels, the community of Jesus confessors is compared to a fishing boat, not an ark!)] Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 295.

of allegiance to a different religious cult altogether (1 Cor. 14:23). The same issue of tongues and prophecy is addressed implicitly in the discourse on love, in that noisy gongs, clanging symbols, release of possessions or being burnt as a martyr (1 Cor. 13:1–3) are public acts of testimony. Paul recounts his own testimony, as an outsider receiving the message of faith from Christ himself (1 Cor. 15:1–11). Each of the eyewitnesses to whom Christ appeared were proclaimers of the gospel by virtue of their testimony. As Paul arrives at the portion of the letter where he clarifies the nature of the resurrection, he does so with concern for how the accuracy of belief in this regard might affect unbelievers (1 Cor. 15:13–14).

Moreover, it was not merely the existence of a distinguishable ethical standard as evidenced in a particular ethos which brought witness. The process of resolving conflicting perspectives was a means of witness in and of itself. Kok points out that Paul helped Corinthian believers reconcile differing opinions regarding the consumption of meat sacrificed to idols:

Here we find the epitome of other-regard and corporate solidarity in action. In 1 Corinthians 10:31–32 Paul clearly links this ethical perspective to the missionary dynamics of the Christ-follower movement. He says that all should be done in such a way that it brings God glory, and that it gives no offence to Jews, Greeks or the Church of God. Above all else, the church should be known for the fact that it is different, it handles conflict differently, it holds fast to the love and fellowship of God and the reconciliation of humanity to God and each other—it shows abounding love and other-regard as a fundamental ethos of life, based on a distinct identity—namely that they are the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ, servants of God and one another.⁹²

Paul demonstrates a great deal of sensitivity toward outsiders by considering how the ethos of the *ecclesia* would be perceived by those who are not members. As appropriately stated by Schnabel, “The ‘example’ that Paul implies in 1 Cor 11:1 has a missionary intention: the work of Jesus Christ procured life for others as he willingly accepted humiliation and death; therefore, Paul works so that Jews and Gentiles will be saved, and the believers in Corinth should work in the same manner.”⁹³

92 Kok, “Mission and Ethics in 1 Corinthians,” 10.

93 Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission: Paul & the Early Church*, 2 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 1462. Cf. Du Toit, “Sensitivity towards the Reaction of Outsiders as Ethical Motivation in Early Christian Paraenesis,” 351.

3.3 *Morality as Ethic, Purity as Ethos*

The ethical norms communicated by Paul to the Corinthians echo halachic codes in calling for moral purity, resulting in ingroup distinctiveness and outwardly focused witness. The force of this statement is ironic in light of Paul's permissiveness regarding fellowship with Gentiles. The answer to this conundrum is found in the ways in which moral purity brings social distinction. As Raymond Pickett has suggested,

What appears to be a paradox, if not a contradiction, namely that sometimes Paul draws sharp boundary lines between Christians and 'the world' and other times radically rejects anything which even smacks of being a line of demarcation, is explained by the way social boundaries function to promote the solidarity of a group by reminding it of its distinctiveness, that is, its purity and holiness.⁹⁴

Sexual purity takes on heightened importance in the Pauline framework. The apostle mirrors the ways in which sexual purity is likened to the holiness motif within the Hebrew scriptures. Believers are described as ἄγιοις (1 Cor. 1:2), which implies that they are set apart from an alternate system of values and norms, in this case, described as the realm of the world. Exhibiting self-control is a means of distinguishing believers from unbelievers. If the ethics and ethos of Christ-followers are considered in the context of a transformative reorientation of allegiance, then the exhibition of self-control is not only indicative of one's ability to meet a particular moral standard but also of one's ability to remain loyal to the entire set of ingroup values. Moral self-control is particularly suited for this demonstration in that sexual lust is a universal human phenomenon, and self-control in this area demonstrates a willingness to sublimate personal desires for a greater good.⁹⁵ Moral norms are heightened in importance because they argue for a particularized response to a universal human reality. Sexual practices and norms vary by individual and cultural context; however, the desire for sexual expression does not.

94 Raymond Pickett, *The Cross in Corinth: The Social Significance of the Death of Jesus*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 143 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 91.

95 Kok, "Mission and Ethics in 1 Corinthians," 7.

4 Conclusion

The *ecclesia* in Corinth was a liminal period where identity formation was being undertaken concurrently with the assimilation of new converts and the development of leadership within the community. Established frameworks for forming social identity needed to be set aside in favor of a strategy for social distinction rooted in ethical conformance, in particular the sexual mores of Christ-followers. Paul is urgent and severe regarding the situation of the immoral man because, by endorsing the immoral man, the congregation challenges the identity framework by which Paul seeks to position the *ecclesia* as the unique people of God. Paul's framework of group boundedness situated the *ecclesia* as a distinct, called-out people who give witness to the transforming power of Christ's salvation. As will be seen, the acceptance of incest within the *ecclesia* directly counters even Roman conceptions of morality and threatens the witness which Paul has positioned the *ecclesia* to have.

Roman Perceptions of Incest

In 1 Corinthians 5:1–13, Paul states that incest endorsement of the Corinthian Christ-followers falls short of divine expectation in the Law, but he also states that their acceptance does not accord with gentile standards, in this case, Roman pagans. Paul is certainly not expressing affirmation of pagans through his comment. Neither is he merely shaming the Corinthians for failing at what even pagans seem to be able to do correctly. Rather, he uses a comparative statement to make his point rhetorically. Paul is commenting on how the *ecclesia* would be perceived by outsiders in light of their acceptance of incest within the congregation, and he is implying how substantially the position on incest would downgrade the capacity for witness by the *ecclesia*.¹ When the Roman view on incest is fully considered, the urgency and severity of Paul makes sense in ways it does not otherwise. This chapter catalogs Roman perspectives on incest for the sake of understanding Paul's reaction. First, the methodology for evaluating a diverse, yet limited set of data regarding incest is made explicit so as to offer a clear sense of how conclusions are derived. Second, the sources themselves are systematically considered in order to establish the point that Romans consistently viewed incest negatively. Third, the overarching patterns of Roman incest references are itemized and applied to explain the disconcerting social dynamic which had emerged in Corinth.²

- 1 Paul expresses desire for witness frequently in 1 Corinthians and many other letters within his correspondence: 1 Corinthians 1:17, 7:16, 9:16–23, 10:31–33, 14:22–25, 15:1–11; 2 Corinthians 10:14–16; 1 Thessalonians 2:9–13; Romans 1:15–17, 15:18–21; Galatians 1:15–16, 2:7–10; cf. Colossians 1:24–29; 1 Timothy 1:8–11.
- 2 The analysis has been limited to the Roman perceptions of incest. The Greek perspective on incest did demonstrate general disdain, although Greeks failed to match the Roman sense of barbarism in the practice. Moreover, Greeks allowed marriage between persons of a closer degree of familial affinity than the Romans. The choice to limit the consideration to Roman references reflects an attempt to identify the specific milieu into which Paul writes. In Paul's time, Corinth was a Roman colony refounded from its Greek heritage. The intervening time between the city's destruction by Mummius in 146 BC and the reestablishment under Julius Caesar in 44 BC emptied Corinth of Greek inhabitants. When the new settlers arrived (between 12,000 and 16,000 in number), they would have overwhelmed vestiges of Greek influence still present. The Romans rebuilt several temples of the previous era; however, they did so with alterations. James Walters, "Civic Identity in Roman Corinth and Its Impact on Early Christians," in Schowalter and Friesen, *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth*, 400–410. Pausanias is perhaps the best literary evidence for the supposed Greek character of Roman Corinth; yet, his rationale for minimizing Roman influence is likely rooted in cultural bias. As

1 Paul's Reason for Referencing Gentiles

Paul references gentile negativity toward incest in his statement of the problem in Corinth. In so doing, he contrasts the perspective of the *ecclesia* with that of the Gentiles. Paul could be directing this contrast inwardly toward the *ecclesia* or outwardly toward Gentiles, and it is beneficial to consider which is the case. If Paul were focusing inwardly, he would be comparing the moral standards of the *ecclesia* with those of the unbelievers, pointing out the irony that believers would allow something which is precluded even by unbelievers. This strategy would shame the Corinthians for failing to meet divine standards of morality, standards which even unbelievers seem to be able to manage in their ignorance of divine prerogatives. Alternatively, if Paul were focusing outwardly, he would be emphasizing the lack of acceptance for incest among unbelievers, along with the potential impact which toleration might have on the perception of unbelievers related to the *ecclesia*.

Evidence of both foci can be located in the text. The immediate context is directly referencing the Corinthian believers through the phrases ἐν ὑμῖν πορνεία (immorality among you, 1 Cor. 5:1) and ὑμεῖς πεφυσιωμένοι ἐστέ (you have become arrogant, 1 Cor. 5:2). Additionally, the infinitive παραδοῦναι (deliver, 1 Cor. 5:5) explains the actions of the *ecclesia* when they gather and the imperative ἐκκαθάρατε (clean out, 1 Cor. 5:7) is directed toward the *ecclesia*. On the other hand, Paul also expresses great concern for the relationship with outsiders in this passage. He begins his comments on the entire affair by using a passive third person verb ἀκούεται (it is reported, 1 Cor. 5:1). Paul could have stated that he personally had heard of the case, but instead he emphasizes the

noted by Bruce W. Winter, "While Pausanias provides important information on the topography and religious sites of Corinth from a later era, his rereading of Corinth from the fashionable perspective of the Greek Classical revival in the Rome of his day does not provide hard background evidence of the culture of the mid-first century." Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 16. There is increasing consensus among scholars that the first-century AD Corinthian context strongly reflected Roman values and practices. Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*, 93–105. Sources reflecting a Greek view on incest were dated to an earlier period and perhaps less accessible or inaccessible to residents in Corinth. It is unlikely that such sources had prevailing influence in the Corinthian context. Even if they did, there would have still been a strong sense of incest aversion as a result. Likewise, conflating views of incest into a 'Greco-Roman' amalgamation does not do service to the subtle differentiations which are defining to the sense of social identity which forms around perceptions of incest in the Roman environment. Cf. Greg Woolf, "Becoming Roman, Staying Greek: Culture, Identity and the Civilizing Process in the Roman East," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 40 (1994): 117.

fact that the incestuous relationship is known more broadly.³ Subsequently, Paul expresses value for association with unbelievers by comparing association with unbelievers to association with an immoral man who is called a brother. With the phrase ἐπεὶ ὠφεῖλετε ἄρα ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελθεῖν (for then you would have to go out of the world, 1 Cor. 5:10), Paul indicates permission for some forms of association with unbelievers. The apostle repeats this affirmation further on in the letter by indicating that unbelievers may invite believers to dinner. He tells believers that they should attend the dinner, if desired (1 Cor. 10:27). Whether believers eat meat sacrificed to idols in the context of that dinner is a matter of witness to belief in Christ. The idol food should be avoided δι' ἐκεῖνον τὸν μὴνύσαντα (for the sake of the one who informed, 1 Cor. 10:28), meaning the unbelieving host.

The key to understanding whether Paul is shaming the Corinthians via gentile behavior or whether he is highlighting the effect of incest acceptance on witness is elucidated by understanding exactly how gentile Romans perceived incest, a consideration which is under-analyzed in the commentary literature. Most commentators offer a representative sample of gentile condemnations of incest without analysis of the context and thus the force of the censure.⁴ Roman perspectives on incest provide significant insight into the ways in which Paul's concern for witness would have been affected by gentile perceptions of the ongoing incest within the congregation.

2 Establishing a Roman View of Incest

In the years preceding and following the apostle Paul's life and ministry, Roman opinion on incest is found in a wide range of literary genres. Though the number of extant references is neither scant nor replete, the references are nevertheless remarkably consistent in their negativity. First-century BC

3 This interpretation assumes that ἐν ὑμῖν modifies πορνεία rather than ἀκούεται, in which case the statement would note that the case is known among the believers. This interpretation is made on the basis of the parallelism present in the phrases ἐν ὑμῖν πορνεία, καὶ τοιαύτη πορνεία ἣτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. The immorality which is ἐν ὑμῖν (among you, 1 Cor. 5:1) is not ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (among the Gentiles, 1 Cor. 5:1). The term πορνεία is repeated in the qualification and then specified with the demonstrative pronoun.

4 Some scholars have even indicated that the propensity for wanton immorality in the city of Corinth caused the incest taboo, though common across the empire, to be overlooked in Corinth. Cf. "The young man practiced this community of life not as a provocative act of newly gained Christian liberty but as a practice that was culturally accepted within the system of social values of a city like ancient Corinth." Wolter, "Let No One Seek His Own, but Each One the Other's" (1 Corinthians 10,24)," 206.

and AD Roman perceptions of incest concur with the relatively negative view of incest expressed in earlier Greek sources. Romans used the term *incestum* for two specific scenarios: the sexual violation of a Vestal Virgin during the term of her service and the marriage of close kin in a prohibited relationship.⁵ While these situations may seem somewhat unrelated to the modern reader, they were closely associated in the Roman mind. This may be explained, in part, by the derivation of the term *incestum* from the Latin term *castus*, which emphasized the setting aside of something for a particular purpose. Misuse of that which was set aside was a violation of the item itself or the ethical principles which governed the use of the item.⁶ This semantic force of *castus* is carried into *incestum*. Both terms emphasize the transgression of individuals in forbidden activity. Both intercourse with a Vestal Virgin and the sexual union of close kin involve violation of that which is set aside for other purposes. That both the violations are sexual acts is important, yet somewhat secondary to the main meaning conveyed by the term.⁷ The primary semantic force of *incestum* offers insight into Roman rationale for accepting many sexual practices with impunity while simultaneously expressing wholesale condemnation of incest. By definition, *incestum* was an act which was forbidden.

5 Philippe Moreau, *Incestus et Prohibitae Nuptiae: Conception Romaine de l'inceste et Histoire des Prohibitions Matrimoniales pour Cause de Parenté dans la Rome Antique*, Collection d'études Anciennes 62 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002), 17–20. The two categories proposed might be expanded to three: sexual intimacy between close kin, nuptial union between close kin which was inclusive of sexual intimacy and violation of a Vestal Virgin. Moreau makes the point that adherence to honor codes for women earlier in the Roman context required that females remain virginal prior to marriage and maintain fidelity while married. While the first century brought some loosening of sexual mores for women, the etymology of *incestum* reaches back to an earlier period when the idea of premarital or extramarital sexual relations, incestuous or otherwise, would not have been conceivable. In the first century AD, the situation was a possibility and thus the term *incestum* readily applied to close kin sexual intimacy outside of a formal marriage as well as to the concept of an incestuous marriage. It should also be noted that modern psychological studies have focused primarily on incestuous relationships which might be categorized as abusive in nature, where the sexual act is imposed on one party either through power or cunning. Less evaluated in modern psychological analysis is the matter of consensual incest, which surfaces frequently in Roman references to incest. Cf. Brent D. Shaw, "Explaining Incest: Brother-Sister Marriage in Graeco-Roman Egypt," *Man* 27, no. 2 (1992): 268.

6 G. Humbert, "Incestum," in *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, ed. Charles Daremberg and Edmond Saglio (Graz: Akademische Druck-u-Verlagsanstalt, 1969), 452.

7 Moreau, *Incestus et Prohibitae Nuptiae*, 18–19. See also an example in Seneca's *Phaedra* of how the term relates generally to impurity even in the context of an incestuous relationship: Sen., *Phaed.* 1185. Richard A. McCabe, *Incest, Drama and Nature's Law, 1550–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 86.

To be precise, it should be said that the testimony of extant Roman sources on incest is forcefully negative. Determining whether this literature confirms a broadly held negativity among the Roman populace is a different matter, thus some comments on methodology are necessitated. The limitations on establishing a universal Roman perspective on incest are twofold. First, the literary attestation of incest in the first century BC and AD is limited to a small number of extant works, of which the primary references in the period are addressed below. Second, the majority of extant references to incest within the period occur in fictional literary works, a genre which is uniquely challenging for analyzing historicity. These limitation notwithstanding, it is possible to make definitive conclusions regarding general Roman perceptions on the matter of incest through a strategy of three mitigations.⁸ The following aspects of the evidence at hand should be considered: 1) the diversity of genre and author in sources reflecting Roman opinions on incest, 2) the complete accordance of negative perspective regarding incest and 3) the widespread reception of the sources related to incest. Each will be discussed in turn.

2.1 *Diversity in Regard to Genre and Author*

Though a Roman view of incest derives prominently from fictional literature, incest is nevertheless addressed in a wide spectrum of literary genres. The genres are categorized diversely. Danuta R. Shanzer organizes Imperial Roman literary references to incest into five areas: historical, polemical, satirical, rhetorical and mythological.⁹ B.M.C. Breij employs a similar construction albeit with different terminology, categorizing literature related to incest into four types: myth, law, historical and literary.¹⁰ Boris A. Paschke utilizes yet another four-fold designation: dramatic/mythological, philosophical, rhetorical and

8 Discussion of methodology related to establishing a general Roman view of incest relies on the scholarly assessments of Danuta R. Shanzer, B.M.C. Breij and Philippe Moreau. The discussion which follows is a systemization of principles noted in their writings on the matter. Moreau does note that modesty is required regarding generalized conclusions on Roman perception since the topic is an interdisciplinary endeavor. Nevertheless, given the lack of extensive research on Roman perspective on incest, the conclusions must be vetted via the lenses of diverse expertise. Moreau provides the most extensive work on the subject in his monograph *Incestus et Prohibitae Nuptiae*. To date, this is the definitive assessment on the topic. See his conclusions regarding modesty and research methodology in Moreau, *Incestus et Prohibitae Nuptiae*, 11–12, 20–22.

9 Danuta Shanzer, “Incest and Late Antiquity—Décadence?,” in *Décadence: “Decline and Fall” or “Other Antiquity”?*, ed. Marco Formisano and Therese Fuhrer, *Bibliothek der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften* 140 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2014), 150.

10 Be Breij, “Incest in Roman Declamation,” in *New Chapters in the History of Rhetoric*, ed. Laurent Pernot, *International Studies in the History of Rhetoric* 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 197.

satirical.¹¹ Diversity in regard to genre, as well as author, does provide multi-valent insight into how incest was appraised. At the very least, this diversity makes it more likely that evidence is representative, in comparison to a situation where data were also limited primarily to a small number of authors or genres.

Despite this diversity, the fact still remains that the majority of references occur within fictional works; thus, this genre necessitates particular attention.¹² Fictional authors do not espouse factuality as a literary requirement; however, they do shape opinion through inventive plot and creative characterization. Fictional works are still contextualized in the milieu of their author and reflective of values which are contemporary to the author and readership. Moreau suggests that literary works might actually be more accurate than works of a legal or biographical nature.¹³ In his reasoning, fictional works offer a commentary on society unbridled by the dynamic of actual relationships. Being distanced from real personalities, the author is free to convey general principles via the story without concern for how the conveyance might be perceived by the parties described. The more personal and emotive focus of legal writing, such as that found in Cicero's speeches, would be absent in a work of fiction where the author is opining more broadly on principle.¹⁴

Moreover, while factuality may not be a literary feature of fiction, the broader genre of fiction is not without literary conventions whereby authorial intent can be discerned. Frances Hickson-Hahn discusses how satirical epigrams treat such a serious topic as incest with wit and humor without diminishing the severity of the offense. Poets such as Catullus and Martial were able to bring laughter to their audiences by emphasizing the incongruity of their subjects' incestuous behavior with the values and norms of the period. The fact that incest intruded upon social convention created irony and made the invective humor effective.¹⁵ The shared sense of condemnation for incestuous

11 Boris A. Paschke, "Ambiguity in Paul's References to Greco-Roman Sexual Ethics," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 83, no. 1 (2007): 176.

12 Shanzer, "Incest and Late Antiquity—Décadence?," 150; Breij, "Incest in Roman Declamation," 197. Shanzer labels this category "mythological" in her schema, declaring it as the most prominent representation of incest references.

13 Moreau's reference here to literary works might be subsumed under Shanzer's categories of satirical and mythological, Breij's categories of myth and literary and Paschke's categories of dramatic/mythological and satirical. Moreau's reference to legal works subsumes Shanzer's categories of historical, polemical or rhetorical and Breij's categories of law and historical.

14 Moreau, *Incestus et Prohibitae Nuptiae*, 20–23.

15 F. Hickson-Hahn, "What's So Funny?: Laughter and Incest in Invective Humor," *Syllecta Classica* 9 (1998): 1–2.

behavior enables the matter to be treated humorously without diminishing the unacceptability of the behavior. As noted by Hickson-Hahn,

In reviewing humor theory and its relation to invective humor employing the accusation of incest, we have seen that incongruity plays an essential or important role in all the texts examined. In fact, this element is inherent in the topic itself, since incest was incongruent with Roman cultural norms. It is to be expected, then, that authors might take advantage of this incongruity for humorous purposes. ... authors deliberately increase the effect of incongruity through contrast, irony, hyperbole, and puns. Quite often a clever twist in the ending provides a sudden frustration of the audience's expectations and gives added emphasis to the incongruity of the subject's behavior. The audience's response to these various expressions of incongruity would have been one of pleasurable surprise at an unexpected juxtaposition.¹⁶

Fictional works have the capacity to provide social commentary. By appealing to audience perceptions through literary conventions, such literature also provides an insight into the perspectives of the audience as well as the author.

2.2 *Unity in Regard to Negativity*

In addition to the diversity represented via author and genre, the extant record is unified in regard to negative portrayals of incest. To my knowledge, outside of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13, there is no Roman literary evidence of positive regard or even a sense of toleration for incestuous practices evident in the first centuries BC and AD. This negative appraisal of incest may appear incongruent given the fact that Romans condoned a wide range of other sexual practices, while considering *incestum* to be a moral fault and a crime. The explanation is located in the Roman perception that *incestum* evoked a disordering of the world as it was created by the gods.¹⁷ As a result, the Roman list of prohibitive consequences for incestuous activity is long, including loss of reputation and personal misery. It is an irony indeed that the sole literary example of positive regard for incest extant in the first century AD seems to be Paul's description of the Corinthian Christ-followers' acceptance of the practice. In light of the unity of other evidence relating to incest, the shock and dismay displayed by the apostle Paul are certainly understandable.

¹⁶ Hickson-Hahn, "What's So Funny?," 34.

¹⁷ Moreau, *Incestus et Prohibitae Nuptiae*, 30–31, 333.

On occasion, scholars have suggested an exception to Roman negativity; however, upon close examination, it is found that the examples offered are actually Roman representations of a minority perspective in a different time period. For example, Boris A. Paschke cites two situations of positive appraisal of incest: Sophocles' *Trachinae* and Diogenes Laertius' record of Chrysippus. The former is Greek rather than Roman and has no more bearing on Roman perceptions than Xenophon or Plato. Diogenes Laertius post-dated Paul by two centuries and thus further documentation would be needed to suggest that his opinion represents first-century AD perspectives. Furthermore, he is describing a Greek philosopher.¹⁸ Craig Keener suggests that "some philosophers regarded incest as unobjectionable."¹⁹ He cites Sextus Empiricus, who acknowledges the existence of Roman laws forbidding incest while referencing the indifference of Chrysippus to incest.²⁰ As noted above, Chrysippus was a Greek philosopher and thus does not offer evidence for a positive Roman view of incest. If anything, Sextus Empiricus is contrasting the negative Roman view with Chrysippus' understanding. Keener does acknowledge that this view is a minority perspective and that "most people viewed it [incest] quite harshly, and laws treated it accordingly."²¹

Perhaps the one other context in which incest may appear to be socially accepted is in the case of the Julio-Claudian Dynasty. Ancient biographers level some form of an incest accusation against virtually every emperor. Such instances must be read through the lens of political invective, meaning that the accusation may or may not be factual. It is more important to read the literature in terms of audience perception as it relates to the accusation. The biographers of Roman emperors used incestuous accusations to impugn the character of the emperors.²² The allusions to incest in Tacitus, Suetonius and Dio Cassius should not be read as general tolerance of incest among the Roman populace, but actually quite the opposite.

18 Diog. Laert. 7.7.188. Paschke, "Ambiguity in Paul's References to Greco-Roman Sexual Ethics," 178–79.

19 Keener, 1–2 *Corinthians*, 49; Craig S. Keener, "Adultery, Divorce," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 14.

20 Sext. Emp., *Pyr.* 1.160.

21 Keener, 1–2 *Corinthians*, 49.

22 Hickson-Hahn, "What's So Funny?," 1–36. See insightful analysis of how incest is used in literary contexts to bring shame on certain characters via appeal to commonly held perceptions of the audience—in this case, lack of acceptance of incestuous practices.

2.3 *Diversity in Regard to Audience*

Yet a third consideration related to establishing a generalized Roman perception of incest involves the intended audience. The examples of literature related to incest are limited in quantity; however, the receptor audiences of these literary references to incest are numerous and diverse. When considering that incest is employed as a part of a rhetorical strategy, one should not merely take into account the number of literary references existing. Literary works are intended to be heard and read. Much can be learned about the audiences by virtue of the literary work itself. Interpreters can ask how the arguments are presented, what assumptions inform attempts at humor, the role of invective and other items. Thus, the size and diversity of the audiences in the case of each of the incest references noted below should also be considered in the establishment of a generalized Roman perspective on the matter. Perhaps it is helpful to make a comparison here. Two to three centuries after Paul, we have multiple references in early Christian writings to accusations of incest which had been leveled against Christians. Mentions of this dynamic are located in Justin Martyr, Theophilus, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Minucius Felix and Eusebius.²³ Such references can be read for their viability by virtue of each author and the credibility of his work, of course. Nevertheless, the broader picture of how Christians were perceived by pagans is also attested, such that the number of works is not the sum of the evidence regarding public opinion. Similarly, in Imperial Rome, the broad reception of the literary works which appeal to a particular social perspective regarding incest must be accounted for in weighing the quantity of evidence available. The audience is much broader and larger than the number of extant works available for analysis.

In conclusion, based on source diversity, unified negativity and widespread reception, we conclude that it is possible to make an assessment regarding Roman perceptions of incest in the time of the apostle Paul. In order to refine the understanding of what these perceptions might have been, a systematic examination of key references within the period is necessitated. This will be undertaken as follows, roughly in chronological order. Sources from the first century AD are most relevant in establishing the Pauline milieu. Nonetheless, material from the first century BC is very helpful as a basis for examining the material from the first century AD. Each will be considered in terms of its proximity chronologically and geographically to the context from which and to

23 Justin, *Apol.* 26; Origen, *C. Cels.* 6.27; Theoph., *Ad Autol.* 3.4; Clem. Al., *Strom.* 3.2.10–16; Tert., *Apol.* 7.1, 8.3, 8.7. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians*, 13–14; Hartog, “Not Even Among the Pagans’ (1 Cor 5:1),” 60, fn 32; Bart Wagemakers, “Incest, Infanticide, and Cannibalism: Anti-Christian Imputations in the Roman Empire,” *Greece & Rome* 57, no. 2 (2010): 337–39.

which the apostle Paul wrote with the hope that the extant literature might illuminate perspectives on incest in the particularities of the gentile environment of Roman Corinth at the midpoint of the first century AD.

3 Extant Evidence for a Roman View of Incest

We now turn to extant literary evidence available for analysis.²⁴ Care has been given to analyze these sources in their original language with due attention to the literary context of the incest reference. These observations have been correlated with existing scholarly evaluations of the literature, usually from outside the field of biblical studies. Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* is considered as an excursus, even though it is a late second-century AD document, given its prominence in commentary literature on 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 and the description of ancient Corinth as its setting. Imperial Roman biographers are considered separately so as to analyze the particular effect of political invective as a literary strategy. Two other important sources of data—Roman census records in Egypt and legal codes found in Gaius' *Institutes* and the Justinian *Digest*—are also separated out, since they form an entirely different type of evidence related to Roman incest.

3.1 Cicero (106–43 BC): *Pro Caelio* and *Pro Cluentio*

Two speeches of Cicero address the theme of incest: *Pro Caelio* and *Pro Cluentio*. The latter makes more extensive use of incest as invective in defense of his client, though both testify to the practice of diminishing a witness' credibility via incest accusations.²⁵

3.1.1 *Pro Caelio*

Cicero defended Marcus Caelius Rufus against a serious litany of charges including civil disturbances, sedition and murder. Clodia Metelli served as a witness against the defendant, and Cicero's speech is as much an attempt to

24 An attempt has been made to be thorough and representative in identifying references to incest within the period, although undoubtedly other relevant sources will surface as scholarly inquiry into the matter continues.

25 Cic., *Leg.* 15. "The pontiffs shall inflict capital punishment on those guilty of incest." Cicero, *On the Republic. On the Laws*, trans. Clinton W. Keyes, Loeb Classical Library 213 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 397. This reference of Cicero might be added to emphasize the seriousness of incest; however, the context here is more likely the broader meaning of incest in terms of banned cultic items rather than in appropriate close kin intimacy.

discredit her as it is to defend Caelius. Cicero offers a “highly coloured description of goings-on in Clodia’s suburban gardens in Trastevere and her villa at Baiae”²⁶ by way of pointing out that she is a loose woman who is unable to be trusted. Included in his lengthy list of disreputable activities is a vividly scandalous description of brother-sister incest:

ex his igitur sumam aliquem ac potissimum minimum fratrem qui est in isto genere urbanissimus; qui te amat plurimum, qui propter nescio quam, credo, timiditatem et nocturnos quosdam inanis metus tecum semper pusio cum maiore sorore cubitabat. Eum putato tecum loqui: “quid tumultuaris, soror? quid insanis? quid clamorem exorsa verbis parvam rem magnam facis?”²⁷

This reference in *Pro Caelio* is augmented by the perception of many scholars that Clodia is the real-life personality behind Lesbia in Catullus’s poems, especially 79 where Lesbia’s incestuous tendencies are on display.²⁸ Though this correlation has come under scrutiny, it serves as corollary evidence in Cicero’s invective regarding incest.²⁹

3.1.2 *Pro Cluentio*

In *Pro Cluentio*, Cicero defended client A. Cluentius Habitus, who had come into an awkward circumstance whereby his mother had deviously manipulated legal charges against him. Cluentius’ mother, Sassia, was widowed when Cluentius was only 15 years old. Her daughter, Cluentia, was of marriageable age and was happily joined in matrimony to a man named Melinus; however, Sassia found herself in love with her son-in-law Melinus. She pressed into

26 Suzanne Dixon, *Reading Roman Women: Sources, Genres and Real Life* (London: Duckworth, 2001), 142.

27 Cic., *Cael.* 15. “[I will take] one of your present relatives, and by choice your youngest brother, who is in that respect a perfect man of the world; who loves you most dearly; who, I suppose, being a prey to a sort of nervousness and certain idle terrors at night, always when a little fellow went to bed with you, his elder sister. Imagine him saying to you, ‘Sister, why are you making such a to-do? Why have you lost your senses?’” Cicero, *Pro Caelio. De Provinciis Consularibus. Pro Balbo*, trans. R. Gardner, Loeb Classical Library 447 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 451.

28 Marilyn B. Skinner, *Clodia Metelli: The Tribune’s Sister* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 125–32; Gaius V. Catullus, *Poems of Catullus: Translated into English Verse with Introduction and Notes*, trans. Theodore Martin (London: Parker Son and Bourn West Strand, 1861), xxiv. Cf. Apul., *Apol.* 10.3. and Ov., *Tr.* 2.27–29.

29 J.L. Butrica, “Clodius the Pulcher in Catullus and Cicero,” *The Classical Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (2002): 507–16.

Cluentia and Melinus' relationship sexually and eventually they divorced. Cluentius was a source of comfort for his sister during this travail, and he determined to cut off relations with his mother for her shameful behavior. As if this were not sordid enough, another man of the same town, Oppianicus, desired to marry Sassia and arranged for Melinus' demise so as to make his own interest in marriage possible. Oppianicus had children from previous marriages, and Sassia demanded that two of them be killed before she would marry, terms to which he agreed. Subsequently, Cluentius was hired by the town to prosecute other legal matters against Oppianicus. Since the case had to be heard in Rome, Oppianicus and Sassia took the opportunity to arrange a surreptitious poisoning of Cluentius while he was away.

The attempt did not succeed and Oppianicus was brought to trial, convicted and exiled. Eventually, he died from a horse riding accident. Sassia, scorned and frustrated, leveled accusations of murder against her son for the accident, leveraging rumors already spread by the lawyer who had unsuccessfully defended Oppianicus regarding Cluentius' use of bribery to obtain the conviction. It is the trial which adjudicated these accusations where Cicero defends Cluentius. In the process of making his defense, Cicero focuses on the incestuous relationship between Sassia and Melinus, a section of *Pro Cluentio* which merits a more detailed analysis.³⁰

Cicero reveals a Roman attitude toward incest by demonstrating the assumption that incest is morally wrong and by showing its immediate effect on personal reputation. His appeal to the common perception yields evidence of its existence: "Nubit genero socrus, nullis auspiciis, nullis auctoribus, funestis omnibus omnium."³¹ He describes Sassia very negatively, appealing in particular to her incestuous choices. Certainly, her life was filled with multiple repugnancies, yet incest rises to the top as that which is most readily impeachable. She is labeled as nefarious, lustful, scorned, deceived, unrestrained, seductive, murderous and dishonest—each of these attributes being linked to her incestuous desires. Moreover, Cicero describes her as impious. She is unconcerned with the perception of either the divine or human observer, making

30 Marcus T. Cicero, *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, 2 (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1917), 208–21; Tullii M. Ciceronis, *Pro A. Cluentio Habito: Oratio ad Iudices: with English notes by Austin Stickney*, 4th ed., trans. Austin Stickney (Boston: John Allyn, 1873), v–x. For detailed summaries of the personalities and the legalities involved in this case, see these introductions.

31 Cic., *Clu* 5.14. "And so mother-in-law marries son-in-law, with none to bless, none to sanction the union, and amid nought but general foreboding." Cicero, *Pro Lege Manilia. Pro Caecina. Pro Cluentio. Pro Rabirio Perduellionis Reo*, trans. H. Grose Hodge, Loeb Classical Library 198 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), 237.

her audacious in her actions.³² In contrast to this wanton lack of control on the part of Sassia, Cicero paints Cluentius as reasoned, self-controlled and, above all, appropriately concerned with reputation. Whereas Sassia failed to allow the positive virtues of modesty, chastity, piety, honor and unity to govern her actions, Cluentius exhibits each of these virtues in his choices.

Cicero makes a substantial appeal to reputation in his argumentation. He notes the honorable standing of Cluentius' father (and first husband of Sassia), describing him as having "virtute, existimatione, nobilitate facile princeps."³³ Cicero likewise portrays Milenus as "adulescenti in primis, ut tum habebatur, inter suos et honesto et nobili."³⁴ This description regards Milenus prior to his marriage to Cluentia, yet even after the incestuous relationship with Sassia, Cicero portrays Milenus as someone preyed upon in his youthful naiveté. He is portrayed as a victim and Sassia as a seducer. Cicero renders Cluentius as a sensitive brother who cares for the grief of his sister, yet even then, the matter of reputation precedes sensitivity as a motivator for his actions. The rejection of Sassia warrants only setting aside the relationship in a private manner. It is the public knowledge of the incestuous relationship which instigates the need for public disaffiliation.³⁵

Cicero anticipates that his appeal to common perceptions regarding incest will resonate with the jury. Cicero castigates: "O mulieris scelus incredibile et praeter hanc unam in omni vita inauditum!"³⁶ Of course, we can see this as a rhetorical flourish in his speech to emphasize the rare and serious nature of Sassia's moral shortcomings. Yet, it also makes a comment on the moral bearings for condemnation of incest: its unnatural character.³⁷ Cicero's account of

32 Hartog, "Not Even Among the Pagans' (1 Cor 5:1)," 57–58.

33 Cic., *Clu* 5. "character, reputation and nobility of birth" Cicero, *Pro Lege Manilia. Pro Caecina. Pro Cluentio. Pro Rabirio Perduellionis Reo*, 233.

34 Cic., *Clu* 5. "a young man at that time eminent among his fellows for high character and position." Cicero, *Pro Lege Manilia. Pro Caecina. Pro Cluentio. Pro Rabirio Perduellionis Reo*, 233.

35 Cic., *Clu* 6. "... ea, si matre uteretur, non solum videre, verum etiam probare suo iudicio putaretur." Cicero, *Pro Lege Manilia. Pro Caecina. Pro Cluentio. Pro Rabirio Perduellionis Reo*, 239. "... lest the very things he could not look upon without anguish he might be thought, if he maintained such intercourse, not merely to look upon but even to stamp with his approval."

36 Cic., *Clu* 6. "Oh! to think of the woman's sin, unbelievable, unheard of in all experience save for this single instance!" Cicero, *Pro Lege Manilia. Pro Caecina. Pro Cluentio. Pro Rabirio Perduellionis Reo*, 237.

37 Pl., *Leg*. 8.838B. In Plato, the reality which prevents siblings from sexual attraction to one another is "νόμος ἄγγραφος." The law is unstated because it is naturally assumed. Cicero seems to appeal to similar sentiment here. Cf. Paschke, "Ambiguity in Paul's References to Greco-Roman Sexual Ethics," 278.

his speech provides a window into cultural perceptions regarding incestuous relationships, perspectives which accord well with Paul's expression ἐν ὑμῖν πορνεία, καὶ τοιαύτη πορνεία ἣτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, 1 Cor. 5:1). Paul seems to be appealing to the very same sentiment regarding incest as Cicero, who uses a similar rhetorical flourish to make his point. For Cicero, it is the mother-in-law who is condemned, and for Paul, it is the stepson. Yet in both instances, they confront the wanton disregard of the offending party for their besmirched reputation.³⁸

3.2 *Catullus (c.84 BC–c.54 BC): Catulli Carmina*

Catullus was of similar social status as Cicero, also living in the first century BC. Some have conjectured that the two may have encountered one other at convivia, most certainly that they would have been aware of each other.³⁹ Catullus was a good deal younger than Cicero and disassociated himself from the political fray, whereas Cicero ambitiously embraced it. The former communicated via audaciously personal poetry, the latter via carefully constructed rhetoric. Nevertheless, both represent the voice of first-century elite authors in the late Republic and both speak to broader social perspectives of their day.⁴⁰ The two authors provide an antiphonal insight into the era. As T.P. Wiseman argues, Catullus is often overlooked for his value, with preference shown toward Cicero's political analysis. Yet the populace then, as now, was thoroughly interested in entertainment—the games, shows and art—as much as politics. It is the realm of literary art through which Catullus makes his social commentary.⁴¹ In point of fact, the author's works correspond to Cicero's *Pro Caelio* where the real-life personality behind Catullus' fictional love interest Lesbia is likely identified.⁴² In this litigation, Cicero was defending his protégé M. Caelius Rufus against the accusations of his client's former lover, Clodia Metelli.⁴³ Catullus's poems 74, 78–79, 88–91, 111 each address incestuous themes, often inveighing against a character named Gellius through irony and hyperbole:

38 Hays, *First Corinthians*, 81; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 385–86.

39 Sarah C. Stroup, *Catullus, Cicero, and a Society of Patrons: The Generation of the Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3–7. Cf. Catull. 49.

40 Stroup, *Catullus, Cicero, and a Society of Patrons*, 3.

41 Timothy P. Wiseman, *Catullus and His World: A Reappraisal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 2–4.

42 Skinner, *Clodia Metelli*, 125–32; Catullus, *Poems of Catullus*, xxiv. Cf. Apul., *Apol* 10.3. or Ov., *Tr.* 2.27–29.

43 Gaius V. Catullus and C.J. Fordyce, *Catullus: A Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), xiv–xviii. See for helpful explication of the connection between Clodia Metelli and Lesbia.

In this cycle, the poet's attitude of superiority and hostility is shown in part by the vocabulary chosen to describe Gellius' behavior (*scelus, quodfas ... non est, nefandus, turpe probrum, culpa*). The poet's hostility toward his target seems to build from poem to poem as his accusations of incest become increasingly hyperbolic. The cycle reaches its climax and conclusion in an intensely "personal" and angry denunciation of Gellius for stealing the poet's own woman.⁴⁴

Catullus describes Gellius' incest with the wife of his paternal uncle, his mother and his sister. Catullus' treatment of the subject is gratuitous and titillating—and might be considered bawdy, even by contemporary standards.

A few pertinent observations regarding the poet's treatment of incest are in order. First, Catullus uses a parallel expression to Paul's *γυναικά τινά τοῦ πατρὸς* (his father's wife, 1 Cor. 5:1) in referring to the relative with whom Gellius committed incest. Catullus's phrase is "ipsam uxorem"⁴⁵ which might be translated as the wife of (his) uncle. It is doubtful that Paul is making any veiled allusion to Catullus' work by his lexical structure for describing the incest, but it is pertinent that we have an example of Roman condemnation for close kin intimacy with a relative who likely married into the family. This degree of relationship does not dissuade condemnation from Catullus in any way. Second, Catullus describes a love triangle where Gellius amorously steals Lesbia. Gellius' reputation is besmirched by incestuous accusations. Though the accusations are ostensibly true, Gellius' motive for spurning the poet through the pursuit of Lesbia lies in his need to exact some measure of punishment against the sully-ing of his reputation.⁴⁶ As noted by W. Jeffrey Tatum,

44 Hickson-Hahn, "What's So Funny?," 11.

45 Catull. 74.

46 Catull. 116. The incestuous accusations are described as hostile weapons (*tela infesta*) which are traded back and forth between Catullus and Gellus. "Saepe tibi studioso animo venante requires / carmina uti possem mittere Battidae, / qui te lenirem nobis, neu conarere / tela infesta meum mittere in usque caput, / hunc video mihi nunc frustra sumptum esse laborem, / Gelli, nec nostras hic valuisse preces. / contra nos tela ista tua evitabimus acta: / at fixus nostris tu dabi' supplicium." Tibullus Catullus, *Catullus. Tibullus. Pervigilium Veneris*, trans. F.W. Cornish, J.P. Postgate, J.W. Mackail. Revised by G.P. Goold., Loeb Classical Library 6 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913), 181. "I HAVE often cast about with busy questing mind how I could send to you some poems of Callimachus with which I might make you placable to me, and that you might not try to send a shower of missiles to reach my head; but now I see that this labour has been taken by me in vain, Gellius, and that my prayers have here availed nothing. Those missiles of yours launched against me I shall evade; but you shall be pierced by mine and pay the penalty."

Poem 116 collapses two stages in the quarrel between Catullus and Gellius. Their friendship was sundered by Gellius' treacherous theft of Lesbia, an action equated with incest, a vice to which Gellius was apparently inclined, as we learnt from the epigrams preceding Poem 91. These vilifying poems ... constitute the necessary background to the insults contained in Poem 91 and they provide the wicked motive attributed in the same poem to Gellius' stealing of Catullus' beloved.⁴⁷

Third, Catullus references incest as *scelus*, a crime which cannot be atoned for.⁴⁸ This term does not convey the notion of sin in its entirety and is contrasted with other Latin terms such as *vitium* (fault, blemish) and *peccatum* (fault, error).⁴⁹ Nevertheless, it does describe a serious transgression of a societal standard, one which bears substantial social implication. Catullus describes the offense as something which cannot be washed away, even by the ocean. As noted by S.J. Harrison,

This notion that large bodies of water are unable to wash away the stain of crime is of course a topos going back to Greek tragedy, but the individual naming of the two sea-deities seems to make a point—a literary point which is relevant to the invective of the poem. ... Oceanus and Tethys, then, are an incestuous couple ... Once this idea is introduced, Catullus' attack on Gellius' alleged incest gains greater wit and point, and a motive is provided for a mythological allusion unusual in this type of Catullan poem. Not even the mythologically incestuous couple Oceanus and

47 W.J. Tatum, "Friendship, Politics, and Literature in Catullus: Poems 1, 65 and 66, 116," in *Catullus*, ed. Julia H. Gaisser, *Blackwell Introductions to the Classical World* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 395.

48 Catull. 88. "Quid facit is, Gelli, qui cum matre atque sorore / prurit et abiectis pervigilat tunicis? / quid facit is, patrum qui non sinit esse maritum? / ecquid scis quantum suscipiat sceleris? / suscipit, o Gelli, quantum non ultimi Tethys / nec genitor lympharum abluat Oceanus: / nam nihil est quicquam sceleris quo prodeat ultra, / non si demisso se ipse voret capite." Catullus, *Catullus. Tibullus. Pervigilium Veneris*, 163–65. "What is he doing, Gellius, who keeps vigil with mother and sister, tunics all thrown off? What is he doing, who will not let his uncle be a husband? Do you know how much guilt he incurs? More he incurs than furthest Tethys can wash away, or Ocean, father of all waters: for there is no guilt whatever beyond for him to attain to, not even if he lowered his head and mouthed himself." Cf. Hickson-Hahn, "What's So Funny?," 13.

49 H.S. Versnel, "Sin," in *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization*, 2nd ed., ed. Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth and Esther Eidinow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 732–34.

Tethys can wash out Gellius' incest, though they are guilty of the offence themselves and might be thought likely to connive at it.⁵⁰

Fourth, Catullus uses the term *fas*, or divine order, in Poem 89. The concept of *fas* contrasts with *nefas*, which is something unmentionable, atrocious and offensive to the gods. If an act of *nefas* was undertaken with deliberate intentionality, it was unable to be expiated by sacrifice.⁵¹ Catullus describes Gellius' conformance to the *fas* yet describes him as *tenuis* (thin) and *macer* (lean). The causation is clear in the poem. Gellius is sexually deviant with his mother, his sister, his uncle and any number of other women. He is incestuous, subservient and adulterous, a strong combination of sexual vice in the Roman perspective. His incestuous vice works against the divine order of the universe and results in his emaciation.⁵²

Fifth, in Poem 90, Catullus compares incest to the Persian magi. Romans found the practices of Persians quixotically odd. As noted by Hickson-Hahn,

Catullus goes on to emphasize the incongruity of such sexual behavior through an implicit comparison to the ritual practices of the magi, which seemed as incongruous to Romans as did their sexual behavior. Rather than offering the entrails of a sacrificial victim, the Persians were said to offer only the fatty tissue enveloping those entrails. In the eyes of the Romans, such an inversion of proper cult practice would have seemed ludicrous.⁵³

The Persian magi themselves were rumored as incestuous.⁵⁴ Catullus continues his *topos* of unnaturalness while also invoking images of the Persians as barbarians. The clear implication is that incest was a barbaric activity for non-Romans.

50 S.J. Harrison, "Mythological Incest: Catullus 88," *The Classical Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (1996): 581–82.

51 Jack J. Lennon, *Pollution and Religion in Ancient Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 38.

52 Hickson-Hahn, "What's So Funny?," 14.

53 Hickson-Hahn, "What's So Funny?," 15.

54 Tatianus, *Ad Gr.* 28.2. "Ἕλληνας φευκτον εἶναι το συγγενέσθαι μητρί, κάλλιστον δε το τοιούτὸν ἐστιν επιτήδευμα παρά τοῖς Περσῶν μάγοις." Tatian, "Tatian's Address to the Greeks," in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume 11 Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Theophilus, Athenagoras, and Clement of Alexandria*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson and Author C. Coxe (New York: Cosimo, 2007), 77. "The Greeks consider intercourse with a mother as unlawful, but this practice is esteemed most becoming by the Persian Magi."

Apart from the Gellius series, one other negative assessment regarding incest is made by Catullus in Poems 100, 110–111. Here a character named Aufillena refuses Catullus' sexual advances (Poem 110). In an effort for revenge, he denigrates her as a woman with only one husband. Seemingly, he is disparaging her virtue of loyalty to her husband; however, the poem then takes an ironic twist where he accuses her of incestuously bearing children by her uncle. The implication is that extramarital intercourse might be considered virtuous in light of incestuous behavior.⁵⁵

The rhetorical use of incest as a foil for socially acceptable behavior is instructive in establishing what Roman concepts of incest might have been in the time of the apostle Paul. Catullus' works are filled with strategic invective, and they are formative in his rhetorical framework. His approach to sexual vice, incest included, makes it clear that this behavior is generally unacceptable.⁵⁶ As noted by Lindsay Watson, Catullus "goes out of his way to stigmatize incest as a barbarous, quintessentially un-Roman form of perversion."⁵⁷ While Catullus predates Paul by a century, there is a strong correlation between his work and that of Martial, whose life overlaps with the apostle Paul.

3.3 *Virgil (70 BC–19 BC): Aeneid*

This epic tale descends into the underworld in book VI. The prophetess Phoebus offers an explanation to Aeneas for what he sees. After taking him through locations for deceased infants, those dying for the sake of love and heroines in battle, Aeneas sees the region of Tartarean Phlegethon.⁵⁸ Terrified of the rancorous sounds which emit through the guarded gate, he inquires of Phoebus as to who is within: "quae scelerum facies? o virgo, effare: quibusve / urgentur poenis? quis tantus plangor ad auras?"⁵⁹ The answer is that in Tartarean Phlegethon are those who "ausi omnes immane nefas ausoque potiti. / non mihi si linguae centum sint oraue centum, / ferrea vox, omnis scelerum

55 Hickson-Hahn, "What's So Funny?," 17–18.

56 Amy Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 144–56. See also J. Tatum, "Catullus 79: Personal Invective or Political Discourse?," in *Roman Poetry and Prose, Greek Rhetoric and Poetry*, ed. Francis Cairns and Malcolm Heath, *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 7 (Leeds: Francis Cairns Publications, 1993), 31–45.

57 Lindsay Watson, "Catullus and the Poetics of Incest," *Antichthon* 40 (2006): 36.

58 *Docs. Aen.* 6.551.

59 *Docs. Aen.* 6.560–1. "What forms of crime are these? Say, O maiden! With what penalties are they scourged? What is this vast wailing on the wind?" Virgil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1–6*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, revised by G.P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 63 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916), 571.

comprendere formas, / omnia poenarum percurrere nomina possim.”⁶⁰ The list of transgressions is long: hatred, greed, adultery, treason, bribery and incest. The very last in the list is a person who committed incest, expressed poetically as follows: “hic thalamum invasit natae vetitosque hymenaeos.”⁶¹ In this context, incest is categorized as both *nefas* and *scelus* by Virgil.⁶² An additional, more offhanded reference is made in book x: “hinc Sthenium petit et Rhoeti de gente vetusta / Anchemolum thalamos ausum incestare novercae.”⁶³ Virgil characterizes incest as a serious offense in these two references. Philip Hardie envisions nuanced characterization and detailed allusions within the *Aeneid* pointing to incestuous themes in the relationship between Dido and Aeneas. C.W. Gladhill analyzes the ways in which the Hymn to Aphrodite surfaces incest within Virgil. Kenneth Reckford suggests son to mother incest in the way by which Venus is revealed in the *Aeneid*.⁶⁴ The assessment of incest is negative throughout.

3.4 *Strabo (64/63 BC–c. AD 24): Geographica*

In addition to Strabo’s description of the moral condition of Corinth noted in chapter 3, he also referred to the barbarous Britons and their northern neighbors in Ireland. His descriptions and assessments parallel those of Diodorus (see below) in categorizing the residents of this far flung island as savagely beyond the scope of Roman civility. The criteria upon which he makes such ascertainment are their cannibalistic and incestuous practices:

περὶ ἧς οὐδὲν ἔχομεν λέγειν σαφές, πλὴν ὅτι ἀγριώτεροι τῶν Βρεττανῶν ὑπάρχουσιν οἱ κατοικοῦντες αὐτήν, ἀνθρωποφάγοι τε ὄντες καὶ πολυφάγοι,

60 *Docs. Aen.* 6.624–7. “All dared a monstrous sin, and what they dared attained. Nay, had I a hundred tongues, a hundred mouths, and voice of iron, I could not sum up all the forms of crime, or rehearse all the tale of torments.” Virgil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1–6*, 577.

61 *Docs. Aen.* 6.623. “This [one] forced his daughter’s bed and a marriage forbidden.” Virgil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1–6*, 577.

62 *Docs. Aen.* 6.624, 626.

63 *Docs. Aen.* 10.388–9. “Next he assails Sthenius, and Anchemolus of Rhoetus’ ancient line, who dared defile his step-mother’s bed.” Virgil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1–6*, 199–201.

64 Philip Hardie, “Virgil’s Ptolemaic Relations,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 96 (2006): 25–41; C.W. Gladhill, “Sons, Mothers, and Sex: Aeneid 1.314–20 and the ‘Hymn to Aphrodite’ Reconsidered,” *Vergilius* 58 (2012): 159–68; Kenneth Reckford, “Recognizing Venus (1): Aeneas Meets His Mother,” *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 3, 2/3 (1996): 1–42; *Docs. Aen.* 1.402–5.

τούς τε πατέρας τελευτήσαντας κατεσθίειν ἐν καλῷ τιθέμενοι καὶ φανερώς
μίσγεσθαι ταῖς τε ἄλλαις γυναιξὶ καὶ μητράσι καὶ ἀδελφαῖς⁶⁵

Strabo goes on to associate the Irish with the Scythians, who might be described as “the ancient world’s archetypal savages.”⁶⁶ These particular behaviors were employed as an invective against those who did not accord with the values of Roman culture. Stamenka E. Antonova explains as follows:

Much like how allegations of human sacrifice and cannibalism function both rhetorically and ideologically to designate the barbarian ‘other’ as the opposite of *Romanitas*, the charge of incest puts into question simply the bonds of fellow human beings that constitute the foundation of civilization and society, but also the more immediate familial bonds, such as the relation between son and mother, daughter and father, brother and sister. As barbarians often represent an external danger to the states, or the destabilizing foreign element within society, the incestuous impulse represents another kind of threat to the fabric of society, this one aimed at the foundation of the Roman *familia*.⁶⁷

Strabo displays outgroup vilification in his invective strategy by virtue of incest accusations directed toward barbarians.

3.5 *Diodorus Siculus* (c. 60 BC–c. 21 BC): *Bibliotheca historica*

Diodorus Siculus authored a historical account which spanned from antiquity to his own time. The work consisted of forty sections, although only portions are extant. Three references are made to incest in Book I, v and xx, each speaking of incest unapprovingly. Diodorus spends the better part of his first book describing the customs and habits of the Egyptians. In doing so, he categorizes the Egyptian allowance of brother-sister unions as being *παρὰ τὸ κοινὸν*

65 Strab. 4.5.4. “Concerning this island I have nothing certain to tell, except that its inhabitants are more savage than the Britons, since they are man-eaters as well as heavy eaters, and since, further, they count it an honourable thing, when their fathers die, to devour them, and openly to have intercourse, not only with the other women, but also with their mothers and sisters.” Strabo, *Geography, Volume II: Books 3–5*, trans. Horace Leonard Jones, Loeb Classical Library 50 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923), 259–61.

66 Diarmuid Scully, “Christian, Pagans and Barbarians: The Irish in Giraldus Cambrensis and the Graeco-Roman Sources,” in *Un Espace Colonial et Ses Avatars: Naissance D’identités Nationales: Angleterre, France, Irlande, v^e–xv^e Siècles*, ed. Florence Bourgne, Leo M. Carruthers and Arlette Sancery (Paris: Presses de l’université Paris-Sorbonne, 2008), 55.

67 Stamenka E. Antonova, *Barbarian or Greek?: The Charge of Barbarism and Early Christian Apologetics*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions 187 (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 230.

ἔθος τῶν ἀνθρώπων.⁶⁸ Modern readers might understand this phrase as an early expression of what is now described as a nearly universal incest taboo; however, it is more likely that Diodorus appeals to the *jus gentium*, a Roman concept with rough equivalence to natural law.⁶⁹ The Romans expected that the *jus gentium* formed a canon of law which was innate to human existence. It described things the way they ought to be according to the pleasure of the gods and the order of the universe. Diodorus is not recognizing a human universal as much as he is affirming the Roman perspective on how the universe ought to be ordered. Those who operate outside of this established framework do so at their own risk, as they might offend the gods and they may be causing life to function in ways it was never designed to do. Indeed, this is how a barbarian might be described by a Roman—an outsider who functions foolishly with malice toward or ignorance of the *jus gentium*.⁷⁰ For Diodorus, the incestuous habits of the Egyptians place them in such a category.

In Book v, Diodorus recounts the mythological incest of Spartaeus, Cronius and Cytus with their mother Himalia. Their father Poseidon brought adequate consequence for the sons, and their behavior is explained by Diodorus as shameful.⁷¹ Another incidental, yet negative, mention of incest is located in Book xx, where the accusation of sleeping with one's stepmother is leveled in a dispute. Lyciscus taunts Archagathus about the relationship. While the author gives no peremptory judgment on the matter of incest, as is the case in the previous example, the implication of the insult stands for itself in the narrative. The accusation is taken as an insult regarding unacceptable behavior.⁷²

68 Diod. Sic. 1.27.1. “contrary to the general custom of mankind” Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History, Volume 1: Books 1–2.34*, trans. C.H. Oldfather, Loeb Classical Library 279 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 85.

69 McCabe, *Incest, Drama and Nature's Law, 1550–1700*, 33.

70 Diod. Sic. 1.27.1. “Νομοθεῖσαι δέ φασι τοὺς Αἰγυπτίους” Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History, Volume 1: Books 1–2.34*, 85. “The Egyptians also made a law.”

71 Diod. Sic. 5.55. “τῆς δὲ θεοῦ διὰ τὴν ὀργὴν ἐμβαλούσης αὐτοῖς μανίαν, μιγῆναι αὐτοὺς βίᾳ τῇ μητρὶ ... Ποσειδῶνα δὲ τὸ γεγονὸς αἰσθόμενον τοὺς υἱοὺς κρύψαι κατὰ γῆς διὰ τὴν πεπραγμένην αἰσχύνην, οὓς κληθῆναι προσηΰους δαίμονας.” Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History, Volume 1: Books 1–2.34*, 247–49. “in her wrath, brought a madness upon them, and they lay with their mother against her will ... But when Poseidon learned of what had happened he buried his sons beneath the earth, because of their shameful deed, and men called them the ‘Eastern Demons.’”

72 Diod. Sic. 20.33.5. “διαλυθέντος δὲ τοῦ πότου καὶ πρὸς τὴν σκηνὴν ἀπιόντων ἐλοιδόρησεν ὁ Λυκίσκος τὸν Ἀρχάγαθον εἰς τὴν τῆς μητρὸς μοιχείαν· ἐδόκει γὰρ ἔχειν λάθρα τοῦ πατρὸς τὴν Ἀλκίαν.” Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History, Volume 1: Books 1–2.34*, 229. “When the drinking was concluded and the men were going away to their quarters, Lyciscus taunted Archagathus on the score of his adultery with his stepmother; for he was supposed to possess Alcia, for this was the woman's name, without his father's knowledge.”

Significant for the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13, this excerpt specifically demonstrates that son to stepmother incest was the material of vulgar and juvenile insults in Roman society.

3.6 Ovid (43 BC–AD 17/18): *Metamorphoses*

Ovid makes multiple references to incest in *Metamorphoses*. Two of the most prominent references appear in the stories of Byblis' love for her twin brother Caunus and Myrrha's love for her father Cinyras. In Ovid's version of the tale, Byblis loves Caunus, though he does not reciprocate her affection, at least in the sensual way in which she experiences her own affection. The initial lines of the poem dedicated to this story express the twisted quandary Byblis finds herself in:

Byblis in exemplo est, ut ament concessa puellae,
 Byblis Apollinei correpta cupidine fratris;
 non soror ut fratrem, nec qua debebat, amabat.
 illa quidem primo nullos intellegit ignes,
 nec peccare putat, quod saepius oscula iungat,
 quod sua fraterno circumdet brachia collo;
 mendacique diu pietatis fallitur umbra.
 paulatim declinat amor, visuraque fratrem
 culta venit, nimiumque cupit formosa videri
 et siqua est illic formosior, invidet illi.
 sed nondum manifesta sibi est, nullumque sub illo
 igne facit votum, verumtamen aestuat intus.
 iam dominum appellat, iam nomina sanguinis odit,
 Byblida iam mavult, quam se vocet ille sororem.⁷³

73 Ov., *Met.* 9.455–67. “Byblis is a warning that girls should not love unlawfully, Byblis, smitten with a passion for her brother, the grandson of Apollo. She loved him not as a brother, nor as a sister should. At first, indeed, she did not recognize the fires of love, nor think it wrong often to kiss him, often to throw her arms about her brother's neck, and she was long deceived by the semblance of sisterly affection. But gradually this affection degenerated: carefully adorned she came to see her brother, too anxious to seem lovely in his sight; and if any other seemed more beautiful to him, she envied her. But not yet did she have a clear vision of herself, felt no desire, prayed for no joy of love; but yet the hidden fire burned on. Now she called him her lord, now hated the name of brother, and wished him to call her Byblis, rather than sister.” Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Volume 11: Books 9–15, trans. Frank Justus Miller, revised by G.P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 43 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916), 35–37.

She fanaticizes union with her brother, pawning these desires off on innocently appraised physical affection appropriate for siblings, all the while experiencing dreams in which she is intertwined romantically in his arms. She battles her inclinations toward romantic love, seeking rationale in the stories of the gods. In the letter she writes to Caunus confessing her love, she expresses her misgivings:

ipsa tamen, quamvis animo grave vulnus habebam,
 quamvis intus erat furor igneus, omnia feci
 (sunt mihi di testes), ut tandem sanior essem,
 pugnavique diu violenta Cupidinis arma
 effugere infelix, et plus, quam ferre puellam
 posse putes, ego dura tuli.⁷⁴

She recognizes that legally this relationship is unallowable but proposes that young love must trump the insensitive requirements of the older generation that form the legal basis against a brother-sister union.⁷⁵

Later in Book x, Ovid tells of a daughter-father relationship between Myrrha and Cinyras where the daughter is the aggressor. Cinyras is as unsuspecting of Myrrha's unrequited incestuous love as Caunus is of Byblis' affection. In a twist of irony, Cinyras brings suitable men for Myrrha's consideration in marriage. She responds with tears which are in actuality the feelings of loss at not having her own father as a lover, though he perceives her response merely as the typical response of a young maiden confused by love. He told her not to weep and then asked what type of husband she truly desired, to which she offers the ironic reply: "similem tibi" dixit; at ille / non intellectam vocem conlaudat et 'esto / tam pia semper' ait. pietatis nomine dicto / demisit vultus sceleris sibi conscia virgo.⁷⁶ Like Byblis, Myrrha experiences a measure of guilt and

74 Ov., *Met.* 9.540–5. "Yet, though my heart was sore distressed, though full of hot passion, I have done everything (the gods are my witnesses) to bring myself to sanity. Long have I fought, unhappy that I am, to escape love's cruel charge, and I have borne more than you would think a girl could bear." Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume 11: Books 9–15*, 41.

75 Micaela Janan, "The Labyrinth and the Mirror: Incest and Influence in 'Metamorphoses,'" *Arethusa* 24, no. 2 (1991): 242–43. The story of Byblis and Caunus parallels that of Iphis and Ianthe, which follows immediately in *Metamorphoses*. Both stories illustrate a character's choice of sameness over otherness. Byblis' rejection of exogamous marriage in favor of romantic love with a sibling is similar to the choice of Iphis and Ianthe to love each other as women. In the Roman context, the latter was socially acceptable, but the former was not.

76 Ov., *Met.* 10.364–7. "One like you." But he approves her word, not understanding it, and says: 'May you always be so filial.' At the word 'filial' the girl, conscious of her guilt, casts down her eyes." Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume 11: Books 9–15*, 91.

shame at her desires. These feelings derive from a shared moral ethos within her context.⁷⁷

Ovid leaves little doubt as to the tragic outcome of her incestuous desire. Myrrha comes to a point of despair, attempting suicide by hanging. Her nurse intervenes at the last moment and beckons her to explain the cause. Myrrha confides and the nurse becomes an accomplice in seeking the wanton incest. The kingdom celebrated a feast in which marital abstinence was observed for nine days, so the queen had vacated the bedroom of the king. The king, being slightly drunk from the feasting, accepted the nurse's proposal to bring in a young lady of similar age as his daughter for his enjoyment. He agreed to the proposition and the nurse brought Myrrha in secret, resulting in multiple rendezvous in the darkness of the room. Filled with curiosity, the king eventually asks for light by which to reveal the young woman with whom he has slept. Upon discovering his daughter, he reaches for his sword to kill her. There is irony in the fact that Cinyras was not concerned in the least that he had committed adultery or broken the period of abstinence, even though the revelation of his incest led him instantly to seek the death of his own daughter. His response throws into full relief the category of forbidden activity that incest was in comparison to other sexual activity.

Ovid describes Myrrha's activity in terms of *scelus* and *nefas*. She was breaking earthly laws (*scelus*) but also committing an offense against the divine order (*nefas*). Even nature seemed to reject her choices. Ovid heightens the tension in describing Myrrha's walk toward her father's chamber. As Betty R. Nagle describes,

Nature itself is revolted—the moon flees the sky, black clouds hide the stars. Orpheus singles out for specific mention a constellation illustrative of exemplary devotion of a daughter to her father. There are bad omens—Myrrha stumbles three times, three times a screech owl hoots its cry of doom. Despite this, she goes on; according to Orpheus, the shadows and night diminish her *pudor*, but the other details he provides tend to undermine that assertion, again revealing his own ambivalence as well as hers. She holds the nurse's band in her left and gropes her way through the darkness with the other.⁷⁸

Ovid leaves little doubt as to his negative perspective regarding incest, whether through Myrrha's halting approach to her own sin or Byblis' unrealized

77 Betty R. Nagle, "Byblis and Myrrha: Two Incest Narratives in the 'Metamorphoses,'" *The Classical Journal* 78, no. 4 (1983): 314.

78 Nagle, "Byblis and Myrrha," 312.

romanticized dalliances.⁷⁹ He presents incest as socially unacceptable, unlawful, morally bankrupt and a purveyor of negative consequences. These points are underscored by the fact that they are shared in common across two stories where the characters struggle very differently with their untoward desires. Again, from Nagle,

It is important that Byblis spends much of her monologue figuring out the significance of her dream, whereas Myrrha understands her desires from the start. Myrrha's knowledge prepares her to resist, while Byblis' ignorance makes her vulnerable to fantasy and wishful thinking. From a comparison of the two monologues, it is clear that Byblis' tendency to fantasy and wishful thinking appears throughout, whereas Myrrha has a stronger grip on reality, which can be related to her constant acceptance of responsibility. On the level of plot, this difference contributes to their respective tragedies: self-delusion leads to Byblis' downfall; not even self-knowledge can prevent Myrrha's.⁸⁰

Ovid was both well-known and well-liked. His influence was widespread enough that some scholars hypothesize that his exile to Romania by Augustus was motivated by the influence Ovid's work might have had in counteracting the moral reforms which the emperor was attempting to implement.⁸¹ Moreover, excavations at Pompeii indicate that the wealthy class of homeowners were uniquely familiar with the works of Ovid and commissioned artwork as a point of discussion related to their familiarity with the author.⁸² The author himself attests to how widely read his works would be (although he would not

79 See discussion in Archibald, which focuses on interplay between Ovid's version and subsequent renditions: Elizabeth Archibald, *Incest and the Medieval Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 89–91. While the stories of Myrrha and Byblis are by far the best known in Ovid's corpus, the author recounts several other incestuous situations in his writings. For example, in *Metamorphoses* 6.429–721 we find the account of Procne and Tereus. Procne asked her husband Tereus to bring her beloved younger sister Philomela for a visit. Tereus travelled to fulfill his wife's request, but upon meeting his sister-in-law, he felt a lustful passion for her which led him to his scheming to violate her. He deviously escorted her back by ship to his homeland, but upon arrival he hid her in the woods, where he raped and physically maimed her. In this case, the incest is by virtue of marriage and is overshadowed by the other hideous crimes of murder and rape.

80 Nagle, "Byblis and Myrrha," 309.

81 John C. Thibault, *The Mystery of Ovid's Exile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 33.

82 Peter E. Knox, "Ovidian Myths on Pompeian Walls," in *A Handbook to the Reception of Ovid*, ed. John F. Miller and Carole E. Newlands (Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 51.

be the first author to overestimate the appeal of his product, if indeed Ovid's projections are grandiose):

Iamque opus exegi, quod nec Iovis ira nec ignis
 nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere vetustas.
 cum volet, illa dies, quae nil nisi corporis huius
 ius habet, incerti spatium mihi finiat aevi:
 parte tamen meliore mei super alta perennis
 astra ferar, nomenque erit indelebile nostrum,
 quaque patet domitis Romana potentia terris,
 ore legar populi, perque omnia saecula fama,
 siquid habent veri vatum praesagia, vivam.⁸³

Certainly, the author's prophecies of future readership have more than been fulfilled. The indications we have yield credence to the fact that he was well read in his day and that his literary influence extended into the time of Paul.

3.7 *Philo (c. 20 BC–c. AD 50): De Specialibus Legibus*

Philo offers an exposition and interpretation of the Decalogue in *De Specialibus Legibus*. Of particular interest in Philo's case against incest is his choice of examples from the Greeks, Persians and Egyptians. Each of these nationalities tolerated incest in one form or another, to a negative effect. The Greek practice of incest, though acknowledged as unintentional, was still capable of bringing calamity upon the nation. The list of negative consequences is formidable: continual war passed along from generation to generation, destruction of great cities to utter desolation, military defeats and loss of allied armies and murderous plots among ruling family members.⁸⁴ Likewise, Philo argued that the Persians' incestuous tendency among royalty was illogical at best and resulted in villainous circumstances, condemned by Moses. The results for the Persians are no less consequential than for the Greeks, resulting in wars, insurgencies,

83 Ov., *Met.* 15.871–9. "And now my work is done, which neither the wrath of Jove, nor fire, nor sword, nor the gnawing tooth of time shall ever be able to undo. When it will, let that day come which has no power save over this mortal frame, and end the span of my uncertain years. Still in my better part I shall be borne immortal far beyond the lofty stars and I shall have an undying name. Wherever Rome's power extends over the conquered world, I shall have mention on men's lips, and, if the prophecies of bards have any truth, through all the ages shall I live in fame." Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume 11: Books 9–15*, 427.

84 Philo, *Spec.* 3.15–16.

sedition and fratricide.⁸⁵ Importantly, Philo makes a direct causal link between the calamities of the Greeks/Persians and their incestual practices: ἄπερ μοι δοκεῖ πάντα συμβαίνειν διὰ τὰς ἀναρμόστους υἱῶν πρὸς μητέρας ὁμιλίας, τῆς ἐφόρου τῶν ἀνθρωπείων δίκης ἀμυνομένης τῶν ἀνοσιουργημάτων τοὺς ἀσεβοῦντας.⁸⁶ Philo also references the Egyptian practice of brother-sister nuptials as bold and unrebuked.⁸⁷ Though he does not provide the litany of consequence as with the Persians and the Greeks, he does note that incestuous practices deny the production of new relationships outside of one's household and even national heritage. Presumably, he references the diplomatic treaties and international influence which might have been foregone as a result of incestuous marriages within a royal household.⁸⁸

Notably absent in Philo's examples are Roman figures, either living or fictitious. Of course, it might be asked what is the benefit of considering a Jewish writer in establishing a Roman view of incest. While it could be noted that Philo offers a strongly Hellenized version of Judaism, this may not make the case that he represents Roman viewpoints adequately. While he is quick to

85 Philo, *Spec.* 3.17–18; William R.G. Loader, *Philo, Josephus, and the Testaments on Sexuality: Attitudes towards Sexuality in the Writings of Philo and Josephus and in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Attitudes towards Sexuality in Judaism and Christianity in the Hellenistic Greco-Roman Era (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 193–95.

86 Philo, *Spec.* 3.18–19; cf. Paus. 1.7. “All these things appear to me to be the result of the ill-matched matings of sons with mothers. For justice who watches over human affairs avenges the unholy deeds on the impious.” Philo, *On the Decalogue. On the Special Laws, Books 1–3*, trans. F.H. Colson, Loeb Classical Library 320 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), 485.

87 Philo, *Spec.* 3.22–23. “ὁ μὲν οὖν Ἀθηναῖος Σόλων ὁμοπατρίους ἐφείς ἄγεσθαι τὰς ὁμομητρίους ἐκώλυσεν, ὁ δὲ Λακεδαιμονίων νομοθέτης ἔμπαλιν τὸν ἐπὶ ταῖς ὁμογαστρίοις γάμον ἐπιτρέψας τὸν πρὸς τὰς ὁμοπατρίους ἀπέπειπεν· ὁ δὲ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων χλεύην <θέμενος> τὴν ἐκατέρων εὐλάβειαν ὡς ἡμίεργα διαταπτομένων εὐφόρησεν εἰς ἀσέλγειαν, ἐπιδαψιλευόμενος δυσθεράπευτον κακὸν σώμασι καὶ ψυχαῖς ἀκρασίαν καὶ παρασχὼν ἄδειαν ἀπάσας ἀδελφὰς ἄγεσθαι, τὰς τε ἰδίας τοῦ ἐτέρου τῶν γονέων, τοῦδε ἢ τοῦδε, καὶ τὰς ἐξ ἀμφοῖν καὶ τὰς οὐ νεωτέρας μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ πρεσβυτέρας καὶ ἰσὴλικας.” Philo, *On the Decalogue. On the Special Laws, Books 1–3*, 487–89. “Now Solon the lawgiver of the Athenians permitted marriage with half-sisters on the father's side but prohibited it when the mother was the same. The lawgiver of the Lacedaemonians, on the other hand, allowed the second but forbade the first. But the lawgiver of the Egyptians poured scorn upon the cautiousness of both, and, holding that the course which they enjoined stopped half-way, produced a fine crop of lewdness. With a lavish hand he bestowed on bodies and souls the poisonous bane of incontinence and gave full liberty to marry sisters of every degree whether they belonged to one of their brother's parents or to both, and not only if they were younger than their brothers but also if they were older or of the same age.”

88 Philo, *Spec.* 3.25.

elevate the virtues of the Jewish Decalogue over a pagan lifestyle, he finds fault regarding the incestuous transgressions in Greeks, Persians and Egyptians rather than Romans. Thus, it is not argued that Philo reflects a Roman perspective himself,⁸⁹ but rather that as an outside observer of Roman custom, Philo does not find an effective example of Roman endorsement of incest. This fact reinforces the observation that, for the Roman Gentile, incest is an activity engaged in by outsiders (foreigners, barbarians, etc.). Philo's proximity to Paul is pertinent as well. Philo provides a very negative assessment of incest in a synchronous timeframe to Paul's writing of 1 Corinthians. In the section immediately preceding Philo's condemnation of incest, he refers to the πολιτεία φροντίδων.⁹⁰ It seems plausible that this would reference his appointment to lead the Jewish delegation to the Roman emperor in AD 38. If this is indeed the case, his writings on incest (including the prohibition of marriage to a stepmother) are in circulation just a little over a decade prior to Paul's visit to Corinth.

3.8 *Seneca the Younger (c. 4 BC–AD 65): Phaedra*

Seneca offers his take on the iconic Greek tragedy initially presented by Euripides. Hippolytus and his stepmother Phaedra await the return of husband/father Theseus, who has travelled to the underworld. Phaedra confesses her desire for Hippolytus to her nurse but falls into a sullen rage, given the lack of apparent interest on the part of Hippolytus. When her stepson returns from hunting, she schemes a way to present her affection to him. Hippolytus is shocked and repels his stepmother's sexual advances. Several aspects of Seneca's *Phaedra* take on specific significance for this inquiry. First, Seneca lived and worked among the elite in Roman society, eventually becoming a tutor and an advisor to Nero. The perspective he presents regarding incest is dialogically interactive with influencers in first-century AD Roman society. Second, Seneca authors *Phaedra* in the same period as Paul's sojourn in Corinth, mid-first century AD. Seneca's presentation of the incest theme may be the closest to Paul chronologically. Third, there are specific parallels between Seneca's *Phaedra* and 1 Corinthians 5:1. The subject matter of the play involves not only an incestuous theme but also a relationship between stepmother and stepson.

89 Nonetheless, this argument might be made on other grounds. Philo's argumentation exhibits Roman qualities. For instance, Philo argues against incest on the basis that it confuses familial structure. The son becomes the husband and the son becomes a grandson, etc. This reasoning regarding the natural order is distinctly Roman in character.

90 Philo, *Spec.* 3.3, "civil cares" Philo, *On the Decalogue. On the Special Laws, Books 1–3*, 477; cf. Philo, *Leg.* 120–31.

Seneca reinforces the association of barbarism and incest by virtue of the nurse's condemnation of Phaedra's desire. The nurse associates the incestuous intentions with barbaric tribes: the Getae, Taurians and Scythians.⁹¹ These ethnic references serve to ascribe a barbaric otherness to the incestuous desires of Phaedra. As argued by Paul Hartog,

The nurse tries to marginalize this incestuous desire by placing it outside the boundaries of not only 'civilized' but also 'barbaric' culture. To buttress her argument, she mentions three specific tribes that avoid such intercourse. The 'Getae' were a Thracian tribe on the lower Danube and a paradigm of barbarity. 'Taurians' may refer to the ancient inhabitants of modern Crimea, who were infamous for sacrificing strangers to their goddess. The 'Scythians' were nomadic peoples commonly portrayed as an epitome of 'otherness' and barbaric practices. In all three instances, the nurse emphasizes the lack of civilized structure in these groups. The Getae are described as 'wandering on the plains,' the Taurians as 'inhospitable,' and the Scythians as 'scattered.'⁹²

As discussed in relation to Diodorus, Strabo and Philo, incest is used to caricature the barbarous outgroup, whether the northern tribes, the Persians or the Egyptians.

Furthermore, Seneca and Paul use the same rhetorical device to indicate general condemnation of incest. In the words of the nurse, those in barbaric lands do not even allow incest, just as Paul indicates that immorality of such a kind as incest does not exist among pagans. Both contexts offer implicit acknowledgment of the existence of incestuous activity while using exaggeration to emphasize the general condemnation of incest.⁹³ Interestingly, Seneca and Paul both proscribe expulsion as the most successful way of dealing with the incestuous person. Given the characterization of incest as a barbarous

91 Sen., *Phaed.* 165–70. “Compesce amoris impii flammās, precor, / nefasque quod non ulla tellus barbara / commisit umquam, non vagi campis Getae / nec inhospitalis Taurus aut sparsus Scythes. / expelle facinus mente castifica horridum, / memorque matris metue concubitus novos.” Seneca, *Tragedies, Volume 1: Hercules. Trojan Women. Phoenician Women. Medea. Phaedra*, trans. John G. Fitch, Loeb Classical Library 62 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 430. “Check these flames of unnatural love, I pray you, this evil that no barbarian land has ever committed—not the Getae wandering on their plains nor the inhospitable Taurians nor the scattered Scythians. Banish this terrible deed from your chaste mind; with memories of your mother, shrink from unheard-of sexual union.”

92 Hartog, “Not Even Among the Pagans” (1 Cor 5:1),” 61.

93 Paschke, “Ambiguity in Paul’s References to Greco-Roman Sexual Ethics,” 183–84; Hartog, “Not Even Among the Pagans” (1 Cor 5:1),” 62.

outgroup activity, the psychological and physical removal of an incestuous person from a context is merely a tangible demonstration of the Roman idea that incest characterizes those who live at the edge of societal norms.

Phaedra's incestuous desires invoke her husband Theseus' jealousy, and Hippolytus is brutally murdered. This tragic twist in the plot intends to evoke an audience response. As noted by Richard A. McCabe, "The orgy of violence in which the play concludes powerfully allegorises the social fury incest was traditionally supposed to generate, demanding no less than the annihilation of the parties involved."⁹⁴ Roman concepts of sexuality favored the aggressor over the receptor in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships. This conceptualization then places incest between a mother and son at a level of greater offense than that of a brother and sister. The mother is intended to be in authority over the son, yet a sexual union between the two places the male as the dominant party. Likewise, if the father is living, the natural authority of the father over both son and wife is undermined. Thus, incest between mother and son turns the natural order of the family upside down in worse ways than other forms of incest.⁹⁵

Seneca provides us with a contemporary template for explaining the Pauline manner of addressing incest within the congregation. The parallel demonstrates that Paul's harsh rhetoric reflected more than a refined Jewish moral compass. The influence of a Jewish sexual ethic in general and of Leviticus in specific are undeniable in analyzing the 1 Corinthians 5:1–13; however, Paul approached incest in a manner consistent with Roman practices as well.

3.9 *Lucan (AD 39–AD 65): Pharsalia*

Lucan was the nephew of Seneca the Younger, thus his perspective, like his uncle, portrays that of an upper class aristocrat who hobnobbed with the national leadership of Rome, including the emperor. *Pharsalia* recounts in verse the civil war between Julius Caesar and Pompey. Lucan portrays Cleopatra as a scheming woman, among other descriptions, using her incestuous choices as a part of his case against her. Lucan levels the incestuous accusation/description with devastating effect:

nubit soror inopia fratri,
 Nam Latio iam nupta duci est, interque maritos
 Discurrens Aegypton habet Romamque meretur.
 Expugnare senem potuit Cleopatra venenis:

94 McCabe, *Incest, Drama and Nature's Law*, 1550–1700, 86.

95 Elaine Fantham, *Roman Readings: Roman Response to Greek Literature from Plautus to Statius and Quintilian*, Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 277 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 497.

Crede, miser, puero, quem nox si iunxerit una
 Et semel amplexus incesto pectore passus
 Hauserit obscaenum titulo pietatis amorem,
 Meque tuumque caput per singula forsitan illi
 Oscula donabit.⁹⁶

The recurring theme of Egyptian barbarism is also evident in the poem, as noted by Andrew J. Turner:

Cleopatra is depicted throughout this account as *incesta*, and portrayed as a woman contemptuous of morality and female modesty, while Caesar, completely under her spell, abandons all sense of duty, both that owed to his family (particularly to the memory of his daughter Iulia, who had been married to Pompey before the civil war erupted), and that to his own political cause. Cleopatra's actions are characterized as consistently devious and calculating—she moderates her appearance in order to manipulate Caesar both through his pity, as well as his lust ... Having achieved her initial aim, she then invites Caesar to a magnificent feast in the palace, where he is dazzled by the barbaric wealth of the Ptolemies.⁹⁷

Lucan material confirms previous perspectives on incest in ancient Rome. The noteworthy component of Seneca's *Phaedra* is that it is in no way an anomaly. Seneca's incest references are closely paralleled to Paul's so as to be of immense value in understanding what Paul is attempting to accomplish rhetorically. Being from the same time period and emanating from similar social contexts, *Phaedra* and *Pharsalia* share similar assumptions as Paul about incest being inappropriate, and they use similar conventions by which to elucidate their contempt.

96 Luc. 10.357–65. “The wicked sister is marrying her brother—the Roman general she has married already; hastening from one husband to another, she possesses Egypt and is playing the harlot for Rome. She was able to conquer the older man's heart by drugs; if you put your trust in the boy, I pity you. If a single night brings them together, if he once submits to her embraces with incestuous heart and drinks in unlawful passion on pretence of natural affection, then he will grant her your head and mine, each perhaps in return for a kiss.” Lucan, *The Civil War (Pharsalia)*, trans. J.D. Duff, Loeb Classical Library 220 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 617.

97 Andrew J. Turner, “Lucan's Cleopatra,” in *Private and Public Lies: The Discourse of Despotism and Deceit in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. Andrew J. Turner, K.O. Chong-Gossard and Frederik Vervaeke (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 199.

3.10 *Martial (AD 38/41–AD 102/104): Epigrams*

Like Catullus, Martial authored poetry in his *Epigrams* which was often bawdy and cantankerous. He lived AD 38/41–AD 102/104, offering satirical lyrical insights into Roman life from the capital. He also acknowledged implicit public condemnation of incestuous activity. Perhaps most interesting is the parallelism between Martial and 1 Corinthians 5:1, in that an incestuous stepson is addressed in both. Of course, this was written subsequent to Paul, but the similarity of the situations provides insight not only into how incest might have been viewed but also into the particulars of a man involved with his stepmother. Many scholars have noted the potential reliance of Martial on Catullus' earlier works.⁹⁸ In this way, the Catullus-Martial connection confirms some measure of continuity in cultural perspective across roughly a century of Roman history. The poets are their own persons, but they both condemn incest via wit, irony and invective humor. Epigram 4.16 offers a scenario where the suspicious absence of Gallus' father implicates him in his incestuous desires:

Privignum non esse tuae te, Galle, novercae
 rumor erat, coniunx dum fuit illa patris.
 non tamen hoc poterat vivo genitore probari.
 iam nusquam pater est, Galle, noverca domi est.
 magnus ab infernis revocetur Tullius umbris
 et te defendat Regulus ipse licet,
 non potes absolvi: nam quae non desinit esse
 post patrem, numquam, Galle, noverca fuit.⁹⁹

The incestuous dalliance of Gallus and his stepmother was the topic of conversation. The term *rumor* indicates the circulation of salacious material that is not worthy of discussion in proper company.¹⁰⁰ As noted by Rosario Moreno Soldevila, "Rumours counterbalance outward appearances and reveal what

98 Martial and Ludwig Friedlaender, *M. Valerii Martialis Epigrammaton libri mit erklärenden Anmerkungen von Ludwig Friedlaender* (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1886), 239; Craig A. Williams, ed., *Martial Epigrams: Book Two* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 34.

99 Mart., *Spect.* 4.16.1–8. "Rumor had it that you were not your stepmother's stepson while she was your father's wife, Gallus. But this could not be proved in your parent's lifetime. Now your father is nowhere, Gallus, and your stepmother lives in your house. Though great Tullius be called back from the shades below and Regulus himself defend you, you cannot be acquitted. For a woman who does not cease to be a stepmother after the father's death never was one." Martial, *Epigrams, Volume 1: Spectacles, Books 1–5*, trans. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, Loeb Classical Library 94 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 273.

100 Mart., *Spect.* 4.16.2.

is meant to be hidden, hence their common combination with adversative syntax.”¹⁰¹ The idea that he was not a stepson is likely an allusion to the fact that his sexual relationship preceded his father’s death and notes that he was functioning in a way that a son would not, an explicit condemnation of incest to a similar degree as that found in Corinth. Martial accuses Gallus and his stepmother of continuing cohabitation after his father’s demise, though it is no longer necessary. His actions are legally indefensible. He would be unable to be acquitted even with excellent legal counsel. Neither a lawyer of the renown of Cicero (referred to here as Tullius) nor M. Aquilius Regulus (Martial’s personal patron as well) would be capable of convincing a jury of Gallus’ innocence.¹⁰²

Likewise in Epigram 2.4, Martial highlights the plight of a mother-son relationship which is all too familial:

O quam blandus es, Ammiane, matri!
 quam blanda est tibi mater, Ammiane!
 fratrem te vocat et soror vocatur.
 cur vos nomina nequiora tangunt?
 quare non iuvat hoc quod estis esse?
 lusum creditis hoc iocumque? non est:
 matrem, quae cupit esse se sororem,
 nec matrem iuvat esse nec sororem.¹⁰³

Martial employs terms with erotic overtones, describing the relationship as *blandus* (tender), *nequam* (naughty) and *iocum* (a game). Williams notes the varying forms of kinship terms and argues that the “intertwined syntax characterizes the inappropriately intimate relationship between Ammianus and his mother.”¹⁰⁴ Between these two epigrams, Martial makes his perspective on incest very clear. Though satirical and cheeky, he condemns the behavior as unacceptable. In the case of the previous epigram, he alludes to the fact that the incest could be legally adjudicated and condemned.

101 Martial and Rosario Moreno Soldevila, *Martial, Book IV: A Commentary*, Mnemosyne, Bibliotheca Classica Batava Supplementum 278 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 191.

102 Martial and Moreno Soldevila, *Martial, Book IV*, 192–94.

103 Mart., *Spect.* 2.4.1–8. “Oh, how affectionate you are to your mother, Ammianus, and how affectionate your mother is to you! She calls you ‘brother’ and is called ‘sister.’ Why do naughty names attract the two of you? Why aren’t you happy to be what you are? Do you imagine this is just innocent fun? Not so. A mother who wants to be a sister is not happy to be either mother or sister.” Martial, *Epigrams, Volume 1: Spectacles, Books 1–5*, 132.

104 Williams, *Martial Epigrams*, 35.

3.11 *Plutarch (c. AD 46–c. AD 119): Bioi parallēloi and Moralia*

Plutarch's proximity to Corinth both in terms of time and distance ought to be given proper weight. He was born c.AD 46, just prior to Paul's initial sojourn in Corinth. He resided in Chaeronea, just across the Gulf of Corinth and to the east of Delphi. As noted in chapter 3, Plutarch travelled to Corinth multiple times AD 98–117, providing a description of the city from the period immediately following Paul.¹⁰⁵ He authored biographical material of heroes in the Greek and Roman traditions in *Parallel Lives* (*Bioi parallēloi*). Among these was the story of the Greek warrior Cimon. On the whole, Plutarch speaks very positively of Cimon, painting him as a magnanimous benefactor, a just ruler and a courageous warrior. Despite this positive regard, Plutarch acknowledges that Cimon's early years were not marked by such a stellar reputation. Colloquially speaking, he was a diamond in the rough. This was recognized by Aristides: οὐχ ἥκιστα δὲ αὐτὸν ἠϋξήσεν Ἀριστείδης ὁ Λυσιμάχου, τὴν εὐφυΐαν ἐνορῶν τῷ ἡθελί, καὶ ποιούμενος οἷον ἀντίπαλον πρὸς τὴν Θεμιστοκλέους δεινότητα καὶ τόλμαν.¹⁰⁶ Plutarch itemizes a series of vices which might describe the youthful Cimon, inclusive of an undisciplined lack of self-control, addiction to alcoholic drink, having an unrefined and simplistic nature, being unstudied and unaccomplished in the art of rhetoric or music.¹⁰⁷ The *sine qua non* in this case for Cimon's youthful shortcomings is the accusation of incest with his sister: "Ἐτι δὲ νέος ὢν αἰτίαν ἔσχε πησιάζειν τῇ ἀδελφῇ. ... εἰσὶ δ' οἱ τὴν Ἑλπινίαν οὐ κρύφα τῷ Κίμωνι, φανερώς δὲ γημαμένην συνοικῆσαι λέγουσιν, ἄξιου τῆς εὐγενείας νυμφίου διὰ τὴν πενίαν ἀποροῦσαν."¹⁰⁸

105 Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth*, 105–6; Plut., *Mor. Quaest. conv.* 8.4.1 (723a). "Ἰσθμίων ἀγομένων ἐν τῇ δευτέρᾳ τῶν Σώσπιδος ἀγωνοθεσιῶν τὰς μὲν ἄλλας ἐστιάσεις διεφύγομεν, ἐστιῶντος αὐτοῦ πολλοὺς μὲν ἅμα ξένους πάντας δὲ πολλὰς τοὺς πολίτας· ἅπαξ δὲ τοὺς μάλιστα φίλους καὶ φιλόλογους οἴκοι δεχομένου καὶ αὐτοὶ παρήμεν." Plutarch, *Moralia, Volume IX*, 143–45. "During the Isthmian Games, the second time Sospis was exhibitor, I avoided the other banquets, at which he entertained a great many foreign visitors at once, and several times entertained all the citizens. Once, however, when he entertained in his home his closest friends, all men of learning, I was present too."

106 Plut., *Vit. Cim.* 5 (481). "But it was Aristides, son of Lysimachus, who more than any one else furthered his career, for he saw the fine features of his character, and made him, as it were, a foil to the cleverness and daring of Themistocles." Plutarch, *Lives, Volume II: Themistocles and Camillus. Aristides and Cato Major. Cimon and Lucullus*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, Loeb Classical Library 47 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), 419.

107 Plut., *Vit. Cim.* 4 (480).

108 Plut., *Vit. Cim.* 4 (480–481). "While he was still a youth he was accused of improper intercourse with his sister. ... Still, there are some who say that Elpinicé did not live with Cimon in secret intercourse, but openly rather, as his wedded wife, because, on account of her poverty, she could not get a husband worthy of her high lineage." Plutarch, *Lives, Volume II*, 415.

Plutarch excuses Cimon's behavior to some degree by noting that he applied his amorous nature in his own marriage after releasing Elpinice to a suitor. He implies that the incestuous relationship with his sister was misguided, though somewhat necessitated by her inability to marry due to the impoverished situation in which their father had left them. What is clear from Plutarch's juxtaposition of the youthful Cimon with the mature Cimon is that he assumed his audience regarded incest as unacceptable. Whereas the vice list could be explained by and large as youthful indiscretion, being resolved by time and mentoring, Plutarch felt compelled to explain the incestuous choice. It was the most serious and pressing charge counted against Cimon's character. That Cimon was able to rectify this mistake by relinquishing Elpinice to a husband, happily marrying Isodice and maintaining a constructive relationship with his sister until late in life, is evidence in Plutarch's case that Cimon is a laudable figure. Foundational to his argumentation is the presupposition that incest was unacceptable and that this would have been an opinion shared by his audience.¹⁰⁹

In the *Life of Demetrius*, Plutarch recounts Demetrius' daughter Stratonice as married to the king Seleucus, but the king's son Antiochus was in love with his young stepmother Stratonice as well.¹¹⁰ Antiochus' physician sets about to figure out the one whom Antiochus longed for. When he settled upon it, he informed the king, who then faced a perplexing dilemma. His son was suicidal with desire for his wife. The king either had to forgo his wife to prefer his son or lose his son to retain his wife. He somewhat rapidly decided in favor of his son, and the king announced that Stratonice and Antiochus would be wed. The king had concern for Stratonice's objections and declared that she should find in her heart to submit to the greater needs of the kingdom by not objecting to the marriage. Of course, we assume by inference that the objection relates to the incestuous nature of marrying a stepson, rather than forgoing a genuine

109 Humbert, "Incestum," 451–52.

110 Plut., *Vit. Demetr.* 38.907–12. "... διακείσθαι κακῶς καὶ πολλὰ ποιεῖν τῷ πάθει διαμαχόμενον, τέλος δ' ἑαυτοῦ καταγρόντα δεινῶν μὲν ἐπιθυμεῖν, ἀνήκεστα δὲ νοσεῖν, κεκρατῆσθαι δὲ τῷ λογισμῷ, τρόπον ἀπαλλαγῆς τοῦ βίου ζητεῖν καὶ παραλύειν ἀτρέμα καὶ θεραπείας ἀμελεία καὶ τροφῆς ἀποχῇ τὸ σῶμα, νοσεῖν τινα νόσον σκηπτόμενον." Plutarch, *Lives, Volume IX: Demetrius and Antony. Pyrrhus and Gaius Marius*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, Loeb Classical Library 101 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920), 93. Antiochus "was distressed, and resorted to many means of fighting down his passion, but at last, condemning himself for his inordinate desires, for his incurable malady, and for the subjugation of his reason, he determined to seek a way of escape from life, and to destroy himself gradually by neglecting his person and abstaining from food, under pretence of having some disease."

love with her first husband, who seems to experience little loss through the 'reassignment' of marital duties.¹¹¹

In *Moralia*, Plutarch shifts genres from biography to essay, exploring a variety of topics. The section entitled "Roman Questions" (289 D) poses this inquiry: Διὰ τί δὲ τὰς ἐγγύς γένους οὐ γαμοῦσι;¹¹² The subject is omitted here by virtue of the third person plural verb, but presumably Ῥωμαῖοι may be supplied, as it is in preceding questions.¹¹³ Plutarch offers three rhetorical answers to the question. First, he poses the practical reality that marrying outside the family allows the husband's influence to extend more broadly. Second, he uses the phrase τὰ φύσει δίκαια¹¹⁴ to indicate that incest is unnatural. Third, husbands might fear retribution from close kin for mistreating their wives in incestuous marriages. Here is evidence of Plutarch's acknowledgment that it was not the practice of Romans, generally speaking, to marry close kin. The rationale for this is rooted in ideological as well as pragmatic realities.

3.12 *Quintus Curtius (mid-first century AD): Historiae Alexandri Magni*

Quintus Curtius offers a Roman historical account of the conquest of Alexander the Great. In the description of the region of Nautaca, which is to the east of the Caspian Sea, a particular leader which the armies encountered had bourn two sons incestuously by his mother: "Satrapes erat Sisimithres, duobus ex sua matre filiis genitis; quippe apud eos parentibus stupro coire cum liberis fas est."¹¹⁵ This very same group is described as *barbarus*.¹¹⁶ As noted frequently, we see a correlation between incestuous behavior and Roman classification of peoples as a barbaric outgroup.

3.13 *Juvenal (c. AD 55–c. AD 138): Satires VI*

Juvenal has a pointed reference to incest as he employs it as an invective against the deceased emperor Domitian. As Hickson-Hahn points out, an "intense

111 This account is repeated by Appian in *Roman History*. See App., *Syr.* 10.59–61.

112 Plut., *Mor. Quaest. Rom.* 289d. "Why do they not marry women who are closely akin to them?" Plutarch, *Moralia, Volume IV: Roman Questions. Greek Questions. Greek and Roman Parallel Stories. On the Fortune of the Romans. On the Fortune or the Virtue of Alexander. Were the Athenians More Famous in War or in Wisdom?*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt, Loeb Classical Library 305 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), 161.

113 Plut., *Mor. Quaest. Rom.* 289b–c.

114 Plut., *Mor. Quaest. Rom.* 289e. "natural rights" Plutarch, *Moralia, Volume IV*, 161.

115 Curt. 8.2.19–20. "The satrap was Sisimithres, who had two sons born of his own mother; for among those people it is lawful for parents to cohabit with their children." Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander, Volume II: Books 6–10*, trans. J.C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library 369 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946), 253.

116 Curt. 8.2.22.

tone of *indignatio* dominates Juvenal's early satires."¹¹⁷ He attacks the emperor for affirming morality while failing to live by his own standards, at which point he inserts the matter of Domitian's relationship with his niece Julia:

qualis erat nuper tragico pollutus adulter
 concubitu, qui tunc leges revocabat amaras
 omnibus atque ipsis Veneri Martique timendas,
 cum tot abortivis fecundam Iulia vulvam
 solveret et patruo similes effunderet offas.¹¹⁸

This theme of incest as an invective against Roman emperors is discussed further in the following section. Juvenal is perhaps most helpful in the sense that he postures himself as an adjudicator of morality for Roman contexts. His irony and humor are intended to call into question the degraded mores of Roman leaders.¹¹⁹ In this vein, he notes that the lustful desire of women drives them to unmentionable acts, which include love potions for stepsons: "hippomanes carmenque loquar coctumque venenum / privignoque datum? faciunt graviora coactae / imperio sexus minimumque libidine peccant."¹²⁰

Juvenal also makes a brief reference to incest when he calls out the incestuous relationship between Berenice and Agrippa, personalities which intertwine with the story of the apostle Paul in Acts 25–26. Berenice married multiple times and even famously became the companion of Titus during his invasion of Judea. Nevertheless, she continually returned to Agrippa after these numerous relationships ended. Juvenal's mention of the pair comes as he berates the notion of marriage, giving numerous reasons why one might not be satisfied in such a state. His argument is accentuated by describing a greedy wife, who demands expensive items, in this case, a diamond. It is in his qualification of the diamond that he offers an aside regarding Berenice and Agrippa: "deinde adamas notissimus et Beronices / in digito factus pretiosior. hunc dedit olim / barbarus incestae gestare Agrippa sorori, / observant ubi festa mero

¹¹⁷ Hickson-Hahn, "What's So Funny?," 29.

¹¹⁸ Juv. 2.29–33. "Exactly so was that adulterer of more recent times, defiled by a union worthy of tragedy, who tried to revive bitter laws to terrify everyone, even Venus and Mars, at the very moment when his Julia was unsealing her fertile womb with numerous abortion-inducers and pouring out lumps which resembled her uncle." Juvenal, *Juvenal and Persius*, trans. Susanna Morton Braund, Loeb Classical Library 91 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 151; Hickson-Hahn, "What's So Funny?," 29–34.

¹¹⁹ Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus*, 199–200.

¹²⁰ Juv. 6.133–5. "Shall I mention love potions and spells and poisons brewed and administered to stepsons? When women are driven by the imperative of sex they do worse things. Their crimes of lust are the least important." Juvenal, *Juvenal and Persius*, 245.

pede sabbata reges / et vetus indulget senibus clementia porcis.”¹²¹ Juvenal’s reference to the incest between Berenice and Agrippa is almost incidental and assumes the case as settled fact. Several inscriptions and other accounts often portray the two as being together. Even the account of Paul’s hearing before Festus pairs Berenice and Agrippa together (Acts 25:13). However, the only other reference which suggests that this pairing was interpreted as incestuous is Josephus, who notes that Berenice married Poleme in an effort to quell rumors regarding incest with Agrippa: Βερενίκη δὲ μετὰ τὴν Ἡρώδου τελευτὴν, ὃς αὐτῆς ἀνὴρ καὶ θεῖος ἐγγεγόνει, πολὺν χρόνον ἐπιχηρεύσασα, φήμης ἐπισχούσης, ὅτι τὰδελφῶ συνείη, πείθει Πολέμωννα, Κιλικίας δὲ ἦν οὗτος βασιλεὺς, περιτεμόμενον ἀγαγέσθαι πρὸς γάμον αὐτὴν· οὕτως γὰρ ἐλέγξειν ὥετο ψευδεῖς τὰς διαβολάς.¹²² Juvenal’s account is replete with social commentary. Of note is Juvenal’s reference to Agrippa as a *barbarus*,¹²³ yet another instance of outgroup vilification using incestuous prototypes in Roman writing.

3.14 *Pliny the Younger (c. AD 61–c. AD 113): Epistulae*

Pliny does not mention incestuous activity as one of the accusations against Christians in his well-known letter to Trajan; however, he does record the banishment of a certain Valerius Licinianus in his letter to Cornelius Minicianus. The praetor had confessed to the crime of incest, though Pliny supposes that he may have only confessed to avoid the potentially greater consequence of denial. Pliny defends Valerius Licinianus as potentially innocent of the charges, but the letter makes it clear that the perception of guilt would create disdain on the part of the letter’s recipient. Moreover, Pliny disputes the character of Emperor Domitian for his hypocritical execution of a Vestal Virgin named Cornelia for her own incest: “Nec minore scelere quam quod ulcisci videbatur, absentem inauditamque damnavit incesti, cum ipse fratris filiam incesto non polluisset solum verum etiam occidisset; nam vidua abortu periit.”¹²⁴ The

121 Juv. 6.156–60. “[A]long with a legendary diamond, its value enhanced by Berenice’s finger. It was once given by the barbarian Agrippa to his incestuous sister to wear, in the place where barefooted kings keep the sabbath as their feast day and their traditional mercy is kind to elderly pigs.” Juvenal, *Juvenal and Persius*, 247–49.

122 Joseph., *AJ* 20.145–146. “After the death of Herod, who had been her uncle and husband, Berenice lived for a long time as a widow. But when a report gained currency that she had a liaison with her brother, she induced Polemo, king of Cilicia, to be circumcised and to take her in marriage; for she thought that she would demonstrate in this way that the reports were false.” Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities, Volume IX: Book 20*, trans. Louis H. Feldman, Loeb Classical Library 456 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 79.

123 Juv. 6.157.

124 Plin., *Ep.* 4.11.6–7. “He declared her guilty of violating her vows of chastity, although he had violated his own niece in an incestuous relationship and ended by causing her death,

accusation of incest leveled against Cornelia is likely used in the more general sense of the Latin term *incestum*, meaning impurity rather than the more specific meaning of close-kin intimacy. Later in the letter, a man name Celer is mentioned as the male accused of the sexual encounter with Cornelia. The hypocrisy pointed out by Pliny is that Domitian himself had committed incest (of the close-kin type) with his niece. Throughout the letter, incest is used in a negative sense as an indication of bad character. The letter also assumes the illegality of incest according to Roman law.¹²⁵

3.15 *Excursus: Apuleius*

Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* is written late second century AD. In this sense, it does not meet the chronological criteria to which the prior examples have been limited. Nonetheless, both David A. Garland and Andrew D. Clarke reference this example in their analysis of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13,¹²⁶ thus it seems prudent to include a brief synopsis and explanation of how this particular incest reference, late though it may be, elucidates the Pauline context. It should be pointed out that the novel was written late second century AD, though it likely reflected earlier tradition, and in this sense may be relevant to the time period.¹²⁷ The main plot of the story is a man's mistaken transformation from a human to a donkey. The resultant point of view for the main character reveals the twisted shortcomings of humanity, as he sees people from the standpoint of an observant beast. One episode recounts the story of a lusty stepmother scheming a sexual rendezvous with her stepson. The stepson carefully side-steps her advances, and she eventually employs the help of a servant to acquire poison by which to murder him. A few of Apuleius' characterizations are pertinent for establishing a Roman perspective on incest. First, Apuleius describes the stepmother as *naturaliter impudica*.¹²⁸ Her incestuous desire, and the acting upon it, are born out of her nature, which is unfitting. Many of Apuleius' characters represent a personal flaw. In fact, it is the ironic vantage point which the main character has as an animal which exposes the folly of the humans.

for she died as the result of an abortion during her widowhood." Pliny the Younger, *Letters, Volume 1: Books 1–7*, trans. Betty Radice, Loeb Classical Library 55 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 271.

125 Jacqueline M. Carlon, *Pliny's Women: Constructing Virtue and Creating Identity in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 196–201.

126 Garland, 1 *Corinthians*, 162–63; Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*, 79.

127 Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, trans. E.J. Kenney (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), xviii.

128 Apul., *Met.* 10.2. "naturally unchaste" Apuleius, *Metamorphoses (The Golden Ass)*, *Volume 11: Books 7–11*, trans. J. Arthur Hanson, Loeb Classical Library 453 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 177.

Second, the stepmother withholds her feelings from her stepson and all others out of shame. On three occasions, Apuleius describes the stepmother's motive for secrecy as her own fear of misperception by others.¹²⁹ This aversion to the incestuous activity reveals not only the perspective of other characters within the novel but also the audience. Third, the stepson is vindicated for his unwillingness to engage in the wiles of his stepmother. His good character and discernment are eventually rewarded when the truth of the situation comes to light. While the exoneration seems allusive initially, the suspense is alleviated at the last minute as accurate testimony regarding the poisoning is introduced into the court of law. Fourth, the story makes use of the caricature of an evil stepmother to condemn the incestuous activity. This prototypical presentation of the stepmother as conniving and evil is incorporated into the story as a condemnation of incestuous activity. Ostensibly, Apuleius could have chosen another character for the incestuous trysts. The selection of a stepmother was likely an intentional literary device, the result of which is a social commentary on sexual desire. The story provides an example of a high-status person compelling someone of lesser social status to circumvent lawful expectations. The stepmother presses her slave into the acquisition of poison, which compounds her numerous transgressions. This story illustrates a situation where the personal honor of a prominent individual eclipses the pursuit of justice. Garland and Clarke speculate that the same circumstance might be at work in Corinth. Perhaps the Corinthian Christ-followers overlooked the sin of the immoral man because it was more important to avoid dishonoring him than it was to deal with condemnable behavior. Their former secular Roman social identities, much less even a rudimentary understanding of Jewish law, should have precluded the possibility of ignoring the transgression.¹³⁰ The use of power to facilitate incest within this story is reminiscent of the narratives considered below regarding Roman emperors, where authority and position often superseded standard expectations of behavior. Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* confirms that Roman perceptions of incest remained similarly negative before and after the time of Paul.

4 Other Sources

Three other source categories append historical data to our knowledge of a Roman incest taboo: Roman census records in Egypt, later interpretations of

¹²⁹ Apul., *Met.* 10.2–3.

¹³⁰ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 162–63; Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*, 79.

Roman legal codes and the political invective of imperial biographers. In the case of the legal material, there is clear evidence that incest was prohibited. The other two sources may at first glance appear to document something other than a Roman incest taboo, yet when appropriately interpreted actually affirm what is evident in other sources.

4.1 *Egyptian Census Records (every 14 years AD 5/6–AD 257/258)*

The Roman Egypt census records are often cited as a well-documented exception to the so-called universal incest taboo and a Roman aversion to incest. In the census records, between fifteen and twenty-one percent of marital unions registered in this region were lawfully incestuous. These records are not an example of deviation from the negative perception of incest on the part of Romans, however. To the contrary, Romans often expressed dismay at the arrangements, classifying it as a barbaric activity,¹³¹ even though the practice persisted due to an exception for non-citizens. Sibling marriages were not allowed by Roman law, as noted in Gaius' *Institutes* 1.61: "Sane inter fratrem et sororem prohibita sunt nuptiae, sive eodem patre eademque matre nati fuerint sive alterutro eorum."¹³² Citizens residing in the Egyptian region were indeed required to abide by the Augustan laws on marriage; however, non-citizens were allowed to follow local customs.¹³³ Egyptian practice of sibling nuptials dated back much earlier than Roman times. Pausanias and Philo both mentioned the practice.¹³⁴ Thus the precedent of local custom overrode the Augustan laws on marriage, which otherwise would have been enforced. When Egyptians were granted Roman citizenship in AD 212, several challenging legal situations eventuated. Previously, the Roman laws had not been enforced against noncitizens. Some people who became citizens were already married and thus found themselves in an illegal marriage by virtue of their change of citizenship status.¹³⁵ Furthermore, as the laws changed there was not instant-

131 Keith Hopkins, "Brother-Sister Marriage in Roman Egypt," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, no. 3 (1980): 303–4; Jane Rowlandson and Ryosuke Takahashi, "Brother-Sister Marriage and Inheritance Strategies in Greco-Roman Egypt," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 99 (2009): 112–13; Roger S. Bagnall and Bruce W. Frier, *The Demography of Roman Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 127–28.

132 Gai., *Inst.* 1.61. "Clearly marriage is prohibited between brother and sister, whether they have been born from the same father and mother or from one or the other of them." Judith E. Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook on Marriage, Divorce and Widowhood* (London: Routledge, 2002), 137.

133 Bagnall and Frier, *The Demography of Roman Egypt*, 127–34.

134 Philo, *Spec.* 3.22–25; Paus. 1.7.

135 Hopkins, "Brother-Sister Marriage in Roman Egypt," 353–54.

neous understanding on the part of all affected, so some people continued to marry incestuously out of ignorance toward the new laws.

The way in which Romans described this activity in Egypt consistently conceptualizes Romans as insiders and Egyptians as outsiders. A critically defining feature of the outgroup was a willingness to engage in incestuous activity. The fact that laws against the practice were not enforced due to technical matters and the perception that Egyptians were outsiders does not indicate a regional variation in the Roman incest taboo as much as it indicates that a universal incest taboo is difficult to establish. By the beginning of the third century, the Roman incest taboo prevailed in Egypt among the general populace.

4.2 *Legal Sources*

In terms of Roman legal perspectives on incest, two primary sources are prominent in our understanding. Gaius' *Institutes* was authored in the second century AD. The work is systematic in its analysis of numerous aspects of Roman litigation. Helpfully, the work has survived virtually intact and is widely accepted as insightful for the legal context of the first-century Roman Empire.¹³⁶ The *Digest* does exactly as its name suggests, collating the writings of numerous Roman jurists by topic. Commissioned under Emperor Justinian in the sixth century, the *Digest* was intended for use in its own time period. Thus, the interpretations are necessarily contextualized within the legal questions

¹³⁶ Wibier offers a detailed discussion of how Gaius operates within a longstanding Roman legal tradition, which can be connected to Cicero and others. Matthijs Wibier, "Transmitting Legal Knowledge: From Question-and-Answer Format to Handbook in Gaius' *Institutes*," in *Between Orality and Literacy: Communication and Adaptation in Antiquity*, ed. Ruth Scodel (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 356–74. For examples of discussion within New Testament scholarship related to viability of Gaius' second-century work for analysis of first-century contexts, see the Nguyen and Deming; V.H.T. Nguyen, *Christian Identity in Corinth: A Comparative Study of 2 Corinthians, Epictetus and Valerius Maximus*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe 243 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 29–30; Will Deming, "Paul, Gaius, and the 'Law of Persons': The Conceptualization of Roman Law in the Early Classical Period," *The Classical Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (2001): 218–30. Note that Gaius refers to the specific situation of Claudius and Agrippina's incestuous marriage (mid-first century AD) in his discussion of incest in Roman law. Gai., *Inst.* 1.62. "Fratris filiam uxorem ducere licet: Idque primum in usum uenit, cum divus Claudius Agrippinam, fratris sui filiam, uxorem duxisset: Sororis vero filiam uxorem ducere non licet. Et haec ita principalibus constitutionibus significantur." Judith E. Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity: The Emperor Constantine's Marriage Legislation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 138. "It is permitted to marry the daughter of a brother. This first came into use when the deified emperor Claudius had married Agrippina, his brother's daughter. However, it is not permitted to marry the daughter of a sister. And these things are shown thus by imperial constitutions."

which were relevant in the later period though many of the excerpted jurists are from the second and third centuries AD. Analysis of these legal texts is made more straightforward by the fact that there is not a record of conflict and confusion on the matter of incest. Rather consistently, Roman law incentivized incest avoidance by perpetuating an identifiable incest taboo.

Prior to analyzing some exemplary excerpts on incest from the *Institutes* and the *Digest*, it is instructive to note a reference by the Roman historian Tacitus regarding the law written to accommodate the incestuous marriage of Emperor Claudius to his niece Agrippina. Tacitus makes no secret of his opinion of the marriage, referring to the relationship as an *inlicitus amor*.¹³⁷ Even more insightful is his reference to the fact that the introduction of legislation allowing an incestuous marriage was novel: “necdum celebrare sollemnia nuptiarum audebant, nullo exemplo deductae in domum patris fratris filiae: quin et incestum ac, si sperneretur, ne in malum publicum erumperet, metuebatur.”¹³⁸ Tacitus records a speech by Vitellius before the Senate in defense of the emperor, where there is an explicit admission that Roman custom previously forbade the marriage of an uncle to a niece. He labels the practice as *novum*, meaning that it is a recent innovation rather than a settled habit. If there had been any change in Roman custom, it was to allow *sobrinarum* (marriage between second cousins) more commonly, but this allowance in and of itself was a stark accommodation from previous custom. Vitellius also expresses awareness that Roman custom differed from that of foreign peoples: “sed aliis gentibus sollemnia, neque lege ulla prohibita.”¹³⁹ Tacitus tells us that at the end of the matter, a formal law must be passed in order to justify the marriage of uncle to niece.¹⁴⁰ Any solution short of this would be unacceptable, as this sort of marital union was not allowed according to the law. The decision to do so was derided by the public. Both the emperor and Agrippina

137 Tac., *Ann.* 12.5. “C. Pompeio Q. Veranio consulibus pactum inter Claudium et Agrippinam matrimonium iam fama, iam amore illicito firmabatur.” Tacitus, *Annals: Books 4–6, 11–12*, trans. John Jackson, Loeb Classical Library 312 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), 321. “In the consulate of Gaius Pompeius and Quintus Veranius, the union plighted between Claudius and Agrippina was already being rendered doubly sure by rumour and by Illicit [*sic*] love.”

138 Tac., *Ann.* 12.5. “As yet, however, they lacked courage to celebrate the bridal solemnities, no precedent existing for the introduction of a brother’s child into the house of her uncle. Moreover, the relationship was incest; and, if that fact were disregarded, it was feared that the upshot would be a national calamity.” Tacitus, *Annals: Books 4–6, 11–12*, 321.

139 Tac., *Ann.* 12.6. “But it was normal in other countries, and prohibited by no law.” Tacitus, *Annals: Books 4–6, 11–12*, 325.

140 Tac., *Ann.* 12.7.

took measures to repair their reputation as a result.¹⁴¹ The later testimony from *Institutes* and the *Digest* confirms that which Tacitus alludes to in his narrative of Vitellius' speech.

4.2.1 Gaius' *Institutes*

Gaius' *Institutes* 1.59 addresses the matter of marriage between parent and child. Even adoptive relationships were sufficient to make the marriage a forbidden kin relationship. Even if the adoptive relationship was ended, the prohibition of marriage remained:

Inter eas enim personas, quae parentum liberorumve locum inter se optinent, nuptiae contrahi non possunt, nec inter eas conubium est, velut inter patrem et filiam vel inter matrem et filium vel inter avum et neptem; et si tales personae inter se coierint, nefarias et incestas nuptias contraxisse dicuntur. Et haec adeo ita sunt, ut quamvis per adoptionem parentum liberorumve loco sibi esse coeperint, non possint inter se matrimonio coniungi, in tantum, ut etiam dissoluta adoptione idem iuris maneat; itaque eam, quae mihi per adoptionem filiae seu neptis loco esse coeperit, non potero uxorem ducere, quamvis eam emancipaverim.¹⁴²

What is clear from this regulation is that laws related to incest erred on the side of conservatism. Most obviously, the marriage of a son to a biological mother was unacceptable. Yet, Gaius goes further by indicating that the same applies when the child or the parent is adoptive, and when adoptive bonds have been undone, the prohibition on marriage remains. It was still considered incestuous in nature:

¹⁴¹ Tac., *Ann.* 12.8. Claudius ordered sacrifices of atonement in the grove of Diana and Agrippina brought back Seneca from exile.

¹⁴² Gai., *Inst.* 1.59. "Indeed, marriage cannot be contracted between those persons who have the position of parents and children, nor is there a right of marriage (*conubium*) between them: as for instance, between a father and a daughter or between a mother and a son or between a grandfather and a granddaughter or between a grandmother and a grandson. And if such persons have joined themselves to each other, they are said to have contracted an unholy and incestuous marriage. And this is true to the extent that, though they have begun to be in the position of parents or children to each other through adoption, they are not able to be joined to each other in marriage, so much so that even if the tie of adoption has been dissolved, the same rule remains. And so I will not be able to marry a woman who has begun to be in the position of daughter or granddaughter to me through adoption, though I have emancipated her." Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire*, 136.

si adhuc constant eae nuptiae, per quas talis adfinitas quaesita est, alia ratione mihi nupta esse non potest, quia neque eadem duobus nupta esse potest neque idem duas uxores habere.¹⁴³

The resulting consequence for the offspring of an incestuous relationship was the status of illegitimacy. The net effect for the child was the same as if the mother had simply been promiscuously involved when she conceived, no matter how official the man and woman considered their relationship to be:

Ergo si quis nefarias atque incestas nuptias contraxerit, neque uxorem habere videtur neque liberos: Itaque hi, qui ex eo coitu nascuntur, matrem quidem habere videntur, patrem vero non utique, nec ob id in potestate eius sunt, quales sunt ii, quos mater vulgo concepit.¹⁴⁴

These legal texts make clear that incest was definitively forbidden under the law. Roman jurisprudence incentivized citizens to avoid incest.

4.2.2 Justinian Digest/Pandects

As with the *Institutes*, the *Digest* offers a conservative approach to the matter of incest. Several excerpted jurists might be noted for their commentary. Scaevola confirms that the legitimacy of the marriage is not relevant in determining if a relationship with a sister is incestuous. A man is not allowed to marry even his illegitimate sister if they are known to be siblings.¹⁴⁵ Ulpian stipulates several prohibitions which show the degree to which incest was forbidden. A father cannot marry his son's fiancée.¹⁴⁶ A man should also not

143 Gai., *Inst.* 1.63. "Likewise, [it is not permitted to marry] her who was once my mother-in-law or my daughter-in-law or my step-daughter or my step-mother." Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire*, 137.

144 Gai., *Inst.* 1.64. "Therefore if someone has contracted an unholy and incestuous marriage, he appears to have neither wife nor children. And thus those who are born from this sexual union seem indeed to have a mother, but certainly not a father, nor for this reason are they in his power, (but) they are such as those whom their mother has conceived promiscuously." Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire*, 139.

145 *Dig.* 23.2.54. "Et nihil interest, ex iustis nuptiis cognatio descendat an vero non: nam et volgo quaesitam sororem quis vetatur uxorem ducere." Alan Watson, ed., *The Digest of Justinian*, 2 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 206. "It makes no difference whether the relationship is based on a valid civil law marriage or not; for a man cannot marry his sister even if she is illegitimate."

146 *Dig.* 23.2.12.2. "Sed et per contrarium sponsa mea patri meo nubere non poterit, quamvis nurus non proprie dicatur." Watson, *The Digest of Justinian*, 200. "On the other hand, a woman betrothed to me cannot marry my father, although she cannot really be called his daughter-in-law."

marry a daughter born to an ex-wife in a subsequent marriage.¹⁴⁷ Likewise, of special interest in the analysis of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13, a son cannot marry the fiancée of his father. Ulpian acknowledges that she is not actually the stepmother (implying that this would definitely be against protocol), but nonetheless the relationship must be avoided.¹⁴⁸ Ulpian allows only for marriage when an adoptive relationship distances the persons such that there is no relationship by blood.¹⁴⁹ Paulus is more restrictive in regard to adoption, specifying that a man could neither marry the wife of his natural father nor the wife of his adoptive father.¹⁵⁰ He even specifies that the father may not marry the wife of an emancipated adoptive son, meaning that the former bonds of kinship are sufficient to prohibit the marriage permanently.¹⁵¹ Gaius specifies that the necessary spacing between relatives for marriage was the third degree of kinship. Until this had been exceeded, marriage was unacceptable.¹⁵² Incest was more serious when combined with adultery. On the distinction between adultery and incest, Papinian makes a qualified assessment that incest is more serious than adultery, although incest might be excused if it is undertaken through a

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- 147 *Dig.* 23.2.12.3. "Si uxor mea post divortium alii nupserit et filiam susceperit, putat iulianus hanc quidem privignam non esse, verum nuptiis eius abstinendum." Watson, *The Digest of Justinian*, 200. "If my wife after a divorce marries someone else and has a daughter, according to Julian, although she is not my stepdaughter, I ought not to marry her."
- 148 *Dig.* 23.2.12.1. "Inter me et sponsam patris mei nuptiae contrahi non possunt: quamquam noverca mea non proprie dicatur." Watson, *The Digest of Justinian*, 200. "There can be no marriage between me and a woman betrothed to my father, although she cannot really be called my stepmother."
- 149 *Dig.* 23.2.12.4 "Adoptivae sororis filiam possum uxorem ducere: cognata enim mea non est filia eius." Watson, *The Digest of Justinian*, 200. "I can marry my adopted sister's daughter, because she is not related to me by blood." Here a euphemistic phrase is used to describe the degree of relational difference in an adoptive relationship.
- 150 *Dig.* 23.2.14.4 "nam et is qui adoptivus est nec naturalis patris nec adoptivi uxorem ducere potest ..." Watson, *The Digest of Justinian*, 201. "[S]omeone who has been adopted cannot marry either his natural or his adoptive father's wife."
- 151 *Dig.* 23.2.14.1. "Item si quis filium adoptaverit, uxorem eiusdem quae nurus loco est ne quidem post emancipationem filii ducere poterit, quoniam aliquando nurus ei fuit." Watson, *The Digest of Justinian*, 201. "Similarly, if someone adopts a son, he will not be able to marry his wife, who is in the position of a daughter-in-law, even after the son is emancipated, because she was once his daughter-in-law."
- 152 *Dig.* 23.2.17.2. "Amitam quoque et materteram, item magnam quoque amitam et materteram magnam prohibemur uxorem ducere, quamvis magna amita et matertera quarto gradu sint." Watson, *The Digest of Justinian*, 202. "We are not allowed to marry our paternal or maternal aunts or paternal or maternal great-aunts although paternal and maternal great-aunts are related in the fourth degree." This point is sustained by the allowance made for fourth degree relations in contrast to the prohibition on third degree relations.

mistaken understanding of the law.¹⁵³ While some cases of incest were excused when undertaken out of ignorance and not considered adulterous,¹⁵⁴ it is hard to say if such latitude would have been present in first-century AD Corinth. Ignorance related to these laws most likely would have manifested in provincial areas which had allowed incestuous marriages by local custom. As noted earlier, when Roman citizenship was granted to all in the early third century AD, some people found themselves under a system of laws with which they were unfamiliar.¹⁵⁵ Regarding the punishment for incest, Paulus distinguishes between those who marry incestuously in secret versus those who do so openly. An open, flagrant violation may be undertaken out of ignorance whereas the secret union is undoubtedly a knowing violation of the law.¹⁵⁶ Some have suggested this as the scenario in Corinth, such that the open nature of the relationship of the immoral man in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 potentially explains the seeming lack of prosecution or other apparent consequence, though this is unlikely.¹⁵⁷ The *Digest* is later than the Pauline timeframe, thus its usefulness in terms of describing the first century AD must be graded in light of its temporal

153 *Dig.* 48.5.39.3. “Nonnumquam tamen et in maribus incesti crimina, quamquam natura graviora sunt, humanius quam adulterii tractari solent: si modo incestum per matrimonium illicitum contractum sit.” Watson, *The Digest of Justinian*, 328. “Sometimes, however, even in the case of males, charges of incest, although they are naturally more serious, are by custom treated more leniently than [those of] adultery, provided only that the incest was incurred by way of an unlawful marriage.” Papinianus provides some ancillary notes on incest, including the fact that a slave may be tortured for information only if two masters are accused of both adultery and incest. See *Dig.* 48.5.39. For further delineation on matter of adultery in Roman law, see Thomas A. McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 140–47.

154 Humbert, “Incestum,” 453–54.

155 Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire*, 140.

156 *Dig.* 23.2.68. “qui vero ex latere eam duxerit quam vetatur, vel adfinem quam impeditur, si quidem palam fecerit, levius, si vero clam hoc commiserit, gravius punitur. cuius diversitatis illa ratio est: circa matrimonium quod ex latere non bene contrahitur palam delinquentes ut errantes maiore poena excusantur, clam committentes ut contumaces plectuntur.” Watson, *The Digest of Justinian*, 210. “Someone who marries a female relative in the collateral line where this is forbidden or a woman connected by affinity where there is some impediment will incur a lighter penalty where he does this openly, but a heavier one if he does it secretly. The reason for this difference is that in the case of unlawfully contracted marriages in the collateral line, those who commit the offense in public are excused from the heavier penalty because they are considered to have acted in error. On the other hand, those who commit it in secret are punished because they acted in defiance of the law.”

157 Of course, the assumption that there is no litigation presumes that 1 Corinthians 6:1–11 is not related to the matter of incest (cf. Peter Richardson, “Judgment in Sexual Matters in 1 Corinthians 6:1–11,” *Novum Testamentum* 25, no. 1 (1983): 37–58; Will Deming, “The Unity of 1 Corinthians 5–6,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115, no. 2 (1996): 289–312.

distance. Nevertheless, it should not be dismissed as an irrelevant source. Of the jurists excerpted regarding incest, some are from a much earlier period. For instance, Quintus Mucius Scaevola dates back to the second century BC, Aemilius Papinianus and Gaius date to the middle of the second century AD, Domitius Ulpianus to the end of the second century AD. Though there are interpolations and edits in the *Digest*, it does demonstrate continuity of perspective over time. The staying power of the codification of an incest taboo is evidenced by the fact that from the third century AD onward there is still a record of what is found in earlier sources. Because the *Digest* is often cited in commentary literature on 1 Corinthians, it is helpful to contextualize the codifications historically. As legal analysis, the *Digest* articulates a negative Roman view of incest in clear propositional terms.

4.2.3 Declamationes Maiores XVIII and XIX

To the primary sources named above might be added Quintilian's *Declamationes Maiores*. A declamation was a hypothetical court case, often argued by students. While the situations are not actual, the circumstances of the hypothetical cases debated offer insight into Roman custom and law, as suggested by Erik Gunderson:

These often ephemeral speeches not only reveal a great deal about the narrow circle before whom they might have been delivered, but they also offer us insights into the emplotting of Roman identity. By this I mean that we find in declamation a constant engagement with the "rules" of Romanness, an endless tracing of the contours of the licit and the illicit. These speeches are predicated upon a hypothetical transgression against society. The fantastic character of the sin and the often playful treatment of its exculpation nevertheless reveal a zone of intellectual engagement where serious questions are elaborated in a pointedly frivolous context.¹⁵⁸

The cases argued are often extreme situations because they are intended to test the limits of social perspective and legal methodology.¹⁵⁹ In *Declamationes Maiores* 18 and 19 we find the situation of a father who has tortured his son to death on rumor of the son's incestuous relationship with his mother. While they are two separate declarations, likely written by two different authors in varying styles, they bear remarkable similarity in content. The legal question

158 Erik Gunderson, *Declamation, Paternity, and Roman Identity: Authority and the Rhetorical Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 6.

159 McCabe, *Incest, Drama and Nature's Law*, 1550–1700, 89.

being explored relates to the authority of the *paterfamilias* over wife and son; however, the legal strategy he uses minimizes the murder by drawing attention to the incest between mother and son.¹⁶⁰ Notable is the fact that the incest is relegated to illegal behavior with serious consequence. Though the *Declamationes Maiores* are dated after the time of Paul, like Gaius' *Institutes* and the *Digest*, they give insight into Roman law which reaches back to prior centuries.

4.3 *Political Invective and Incest*

The biographical accounts of the Roman imperial families provide no end of exceptions to the Roman prohibition on incest otherwise evident in the previous examples cited. Yet, it is the scandalous nature of these public exceptions which serves to underscore the general affirmation of an incest taboo. Three major figures serve as biographers, none overly sympathetic to the figures they portray: Suetonius in *De Vita Caesarum*, Tacitus in *Annales* and Dio Cassius in *Historia Romana*. The former two works come much closer to Paul's time than the latter one, though all describe history concurrent with Paul's milieu. There is ongoing debate as to the accuracy of rumors lodged against various public figures in the writings of these Roman historians. Many scholars dismiss the incestuous accusations as unfounded invective.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, it is not the factuality of these cases which is most informative for our purposes, but rather the literary strategy by which the accusations are woven into the narratives of these authors. As noted by Jennifer Knust, "allegations of moral turpitude were standard fare in ancient rhetorical invective, available to any author interested in discrediting an opponent or set of opponents."¹⁶² The cases of incest—and

160 Beatrjjs M.C. Breij, *Quintilian: The Son Suspected of Incest with His Mother (Major Declamations 18–19)*, Collana di Studi Umanistici 7 (Cassino: Università degli studi di Cassino, 2015), 78–81.

161 Anthony Barrett, *Agrippina: Sex, Power, and Politics in the Early Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 62. Barrett is an example of such dismissal. For more detailed history of invective against political figures in Rome, see Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus*, 153–54.

162 Jennifer W. Knust, *Abandoned to Lust: Sexual Slander and Ancient Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 5. Knust applies this principal equally to pagans and Christians, viewing both as having sexual standards which were applied to the outsider. Also consider: "The accusation that a man did not possess *pudicitia* was therefore an assault on his very fitness as a citizen and it was liberally thrown about in ancient Roman oratory—it was a key weapon in the armoury of an orator's invective. The world of politics and public speaking in Rome was one in which men were trained to accuse one another strategically of sexual immorality, in order to blacken another's character and to cut at the heart of his integrity as a citizen." Rebecca Langlands, *Sexual Morality in Ancient Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 284.

they are numerous—are utilized as a smear of character, a negative assessment of the individuals involved. It is even possible that a prototypical narrative developed by which the attribution of incest was a well-worn strategy for derogation. Moreover, such incestuous characterizations are largely assumed by the audience as negative. There are no explanatory notes as to why the reader ought to consider incestuous activity as inappropriate, as if there might be a reader who differed in opinion.¹⁶³ The audiences of these works knew full well what was being implicitly expressed by the text because it appealed to a mutually accepted cultural norm. As noted by Fredrik Ivarsson,

sexual slander is very common in polemic and political agitation. The speeches of Cicero and Suetonius' biographies of the emperors are filled with allegations of sexual irregularities—senators and emperors are accused of seducing married women and citizen youths, forcing their own wives or other men's wives into prostitution, depilating their body hair, indulging in incest, and submitting to male lovers. These allegations are certainly not all true—some may not even be meant to be taken seriously—but they illustrate the high cultural and political value of masculinity.¹⁶⁴

Not one of the emperors within the Julio-Claudian dynasty is without some form of incestuous accusation. A chronological account of the incest accusations and their rhetorical context follows.

4.3.1 Augustus

Suetonius implies by way of Caligula's perceptions that Augustus committed incest. He suggests that Caligula was ashamed of his ancestry and promoted the idea that his mother had been born of an incestuous union between Augustus and his daughter Julia: "Praedicabat autem matrem suam ex incesto, quod Augustus cum Iulia filia admisisset, procreatam."¹⁶⁵ This may have been either a falsehood or a misunderstanding on the part of Suetonius since

¹⁶³ Campbell Calverley, "A Sin Against God: The Rhetoric of Incest in Senecan Tragedy and Tacitean History" (Master of Arts, University of Otago, 2017); Langlands, *Sexual Morality in Ancient Rome*, 9–29, 286ff.; Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus*, 105–109.

¹⁶⁴ Ivarsson, "A Man Has to Do What a Man Has to Do: Protocols of Masculine Sexual Behavior and 1 Corinthians 5–7," 187.

¹⁶⁵ Suet., *Calig.* 12.23.1. "He even boasted that his own mother was born in incest, which Augustus had committed with his daughter Julia." Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars, Volume 1: Julius. Augustus. Tiberius. Gaius. Caligula*, trans. J.C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library 31 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), 451.

numerous examples of Caligula's affirmation of his lineage are also extant. It is possible that Caligula referred to Augustus' third wife Livia Julia rather than Augustus' daughter Julia.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, whether Suetonius got it right or not, there is no assumption that the incest is in any way laudable. In fact, the author offers his own commentary, labelling the accusation from Caligula as *insectatio* (slur).¹⁶⁷

4.3.2 Tiberius

While Tiberius is not accused of incestuous practices himself, Dio Cassius mentions Tiberius' reputation for using a false rumor of incest against his opponent Sextus Marius. Though he had been made quite wealthy due to the favor of the emperor, Marius feared that his daughter might be brought to shame by Caligula. Dio Cassius implies that there may have been an expectation that Marius' daughter would take part in the orgiastic practices of the emperor.¹⁶⁸ Marius sends his daughter into hiding, but Tiberius destroyed his reputation by accusing him of incest with his daughter. This eventually leads to Marius' death.¹⁶⁹ The emperor wielded invective regarding incest as a political tool against those who failed to do his bidding. The clear impact of the incest accusation on the man's reputation and well-being are noted in the narrative.

4.3.3 Caligula

Suetonius recorded that Caligula engaged in incestuous relationships with his sisters, having a particular affinity for Drusilla. The biographical account described Caligula as engaging in intimacy with her even before receiving his *toga virilis*, as well as enjoying her sexually after her marriage to Cassius Longinus.¹⁷⁰ As with his discussion of Caligula's perceptions of Augustus, these descriptions may not be accurate. Seneca and Philo both authored biographical information about Caligula as contemporaries, and neither leveled the accusation, despite having the opportunity to further their literary purposes by the inclusion of such an accusation. Likewise, Tacitus gives attention to Caligula's sister, Agrippina, noting her incestuous dalliances with her son, but

166 David Woods, "Caligula on Augustus' Alleged Incest with Julia," *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 152 (2009): 401–2.

167 Suet., *Calig.* 23.1.

168 Dio Cass. 58.22.1. "ἐκ δὲ δὴ τῶν ἐρώτων, οἷς ἀνέδην καὶ τῶν εὐγενεστάτων καὶ ἀρρένων καὶ θηλειῶν ὁμοίως ἐχρήτο διεβάλλετο." Dio Cassius, *Roman History, Volume VII: Books 56–60*, trans. Earnest Cary, Herbert B. Foster, Loeb Classical Library 175 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924), 241. "But the sensual orgies which he carried on shamelessly with persons of the highest rank, both male and female, brought him ill repute."

169 Dio Cass. 58.22.4.

170 Suet., *Calig.* 24.

he does not mention any with her brother Caligula. There are several descriptors of Caligula's behavior which seem incredulous at best, and the incest accusations may fall into a similar category. Nevertheless, by lodging such rumors against Caligula, the incest taboo was appealed to and underscored.

4.3.4 Claudius

Suetonius and Tacitus both record the circumstance of Claudius' incestuous marriage to Agrippina. While the accounts are written slightly after the time of Paul, it should be noted that the events described occurred in close proximity to Paul's visit to Corinth on the second missionary journey. Claudius and Agrippina married in AD 49, whereas Paul travelled to Corinth in AD 51/52, so the debate in the Roman Senate regarding Claudius and the laws pertaining to incest had very recently been a topic of discussion within the empire. Claudius put his wife Messalina to death after her adulterous and seditious schemes were made known to him. He then married his niece Agrippina. Being technically illegal to marry one's niece, he compelled the Senate to alter the law for the accommodation of his interests. The reform made allowance only for what the specific situation required. The Senate opted against a broad reform related to incest laws. Marriage of a niece to an uncle was made allowable, though a nephew could not marry his aunt.¹⁷¹ Eventually, the exemption for uncle-niece nuptials was revoked in AD 342 by Theodosius.¹⁷² As described by Tacitus, the action of the Senate represented political expediency rather than a reflection of changing tides in social norms.¹⁷³ Suetonius offers a perfunctory synopsis of Claudius' marriage to Agrippina, who was his niece, being the daughter of Claudius' brother Germanicus. He portrays Agrippina as a flirtatious woman who offered Claudius desirable companionship. The narrative confirms that Roman law forbid the marriage of an uncle to a niece and that the laws had to be altered to seal the relationship. Suetonius makes it clear that the alteration of the law in no way equated to a change in perspective regarding the incest taboo within the broader society:

171 Cf. Gai., *Inst.* 1.62.

172 *Cod. Theod.* 3.12.1, 31. "If anyone has believed—abominably—that the daughter of a brother or a sister should be made a wife, or has flown into her embrace not as a paternal or maternal uncle, he shall be held by the penalty of a capital sentence." Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire*, 161.

173 Tac., *Ann.* 12.7. "Nec tamen repertus est nisi unus talis matrimonii cupitor, Alledius Severus eques Romanus, quem plerique Agrippinae gratia impulsum ferebant." Tacitus, *Annals: Books 4–6, 11–12*, 325. "None the less, only a single enthusiast for that form of matrimony was discovered—the Roman knight Alledius Severus, whose motive was generally said to have been desire for the favour of Agrippina."

Verum inlecebris Agrippinae, Germanici fratris sui filiae, per ius osculi et blanditiarum occasiones pellectus in amorem, subornavit proximo senatu qui censerent, cogendum se ad ducendum eam uxorem, quasi rei p. maxime interesset, dandamque ceteris veniam talium coniugiorum, quae ad id tempus incesta habebantur. Ac vix uno interposito die confecit nuptias, non repertis qui sequerentur exemplum, excepto libertino quodam et altero primipilari, cuius nuptiarum officium et ipse cum Agrippina celebravit.¹⁷⁴

So great was the repugnancy at incest that none, save two men, are known to have followed in Claudius' example of lawful, incestuous marriage.

Roman disapproval of incest is further confirmed in the situation of Silanus, who was engaged to Claudius' daughter. Agrippina was determined for a marriage between Claudius' daughter and her son Nero. She summarily cleared the way by circulating rumors regarding Silanus' incestuous affection for his sister. The engagement was broken off and Silanus eventually committed suicide. The irony is thick, that Agrippina successfully besmirched the reputation of a praetor via rumors of brother-sister incest, only to engage in uncle-niece incest in her own marriage shortly thereafter. The success of Agrippina's rumor mill and the obsequious legislation in the Senate both document the incest taboo present in the first-century Roman context.¹⁷⁵

4.3.5 Nero

Tacitus offers an account of Acte's warning to Nero about the rumors of incest spread by Agrippina. The following quote illustrates the degree to which Tacitus viewed the incest as negatively perceived by the public:

¹⁷⁴ Suet., *Claud.* 26.3. "But his affections were ensnared by the wiles of Agrippina, daughter of his brother Germanicus, aided by the right of exchanging kisses and the opportunities for endearments offered by their relationship; and at the next meeting of the senate he induced some of the members to propose that he be compelled to marry Agrippina, on the ground that it was for the interest of the State; also that others be allowed to contract similar marriages, which up to that time had been regarded as incestuous. And he married her with hardly a single day's delay; but none were found to follow his example save a freedman and a chief centurion, whose marriage ceremony he himself attended with Agrippina." Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars, Volume 11: Claudius. Nero. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. Vespasian. Titus, Domitian. Lives of Illustrious Men: Grammarians and Rhetoricians. Poets (Terence. Virgil. Horace. Tibullus. Persius. Lucan). Lives of Pliny the Elder and Passienus Crispus*, trans. J.C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library 38 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), 55.

¹⁷⁵ Tac., *Ann* 7.4–5, 9.

Tradit Cluvius ardore retinendae Agrippinam potentiae eo usque provectam, ut medio diei, cum id temporis Nero per vinum et epulas incalesceret, offerret se saepius temulento comptam et incesto paratam. Iamque lasciva oscula et praenuntias flagitii blanditias adnotantibus proximis, Senecam contra muliebres inlecebras subsidium a femina petivisse, inmissamque Acten libertam, quae simul suo periculo et infamia Neronis anxia deferret pervulgatum esse incestum gloriante matre, nec toleraturos milites profani principis imperium. Fabius Rusticus non Agrippinae, sed Neroni cupitum id memorat eiusdemque libertae astu diseictum. Sed quae Cluvius, eadem ceteri quoque auctores prodidere, et fama huc inclinat, seu concepit animo tantum inmanitatis Agrippina, seu credibilior novae libidinis meditatio in ea visa est, quae puellaribus annis stuprum cum Lepido spe dominationis admiserat, pari cupidine usque ad libita Pallantis provoluta et exercita ad omne flagitium patruī nuptiis.¹⁷⁶

Tacitus not only communicates his own disdain for incest but also insight into the fact that this perspective was shared by a wider audience. He employs the terms *infamia* (notoriety) and *pervulgatus* (pervasiveness) to indicate widespread disapproval. Acte is concerned that Nero would be considered *profani* (impious), here emphasizing the way in which incest moves against the divine order. Agrippina's tactics are described as *flagitium* (shameful, outrageous) and *inmanitas* (barbaric, brutish). His discourse leaves little doubt in the mind of the reader as to Tacitus' perspective on the matter.¹⁷⁷

176 Tac., *Ann.* 14.2. "It is stated by Cluvius that Agrippina's ardour to keep her influence was carried so far that at midday, an hour at which Nero was beginning to experience the warmth of wine and good cheer, she presented herself on several occasions to her half-tipsy son, coquettishly dressed and prepared for incest. Already lascivious kisses, and endearments that were the harbingers of guilt, had been observed by their intimates, when Seneca sought in a woman the antidote to female blandishments, and brought in the freed-woman Acte, who, alarmed as she was both at her own danger and at Nero's infamy, was to report that the incest was common knowledge, since his mother boasted of it, and that the troops would not submit to the supremacy of a sacrilegious emperor. According to Fabius Rusticus, not Agrippina, but Nero, desired the union, the scheme being wrecked by the astuteness of the same freedwoman. The other authorities, however, give the same version as Cluvius, and to their side tradition leans; whether the enormity was actually conceived in the brain of Agrippina, or whether the contemplation of such a refinement in lust was merely taken as comparatively credible in a woman who, for the prospect of power, had in her girlish years yielded to the embraces of Marcus Lepidus; who, for a similar ambition had prostituted herself to the desires of Pallas; and who had been inured to every turpitude by her marriage with her uncle." Tacitus, *Annals: Books 13–16*, trans. John Jackson, Loeb Classical Library 322 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), 109.

177 Moreau, *Incestus et Prohibitae Nuptiae*, 35–36. Tacitus refers to incest on six occasions, each negative in connotation without positive outcome in the scenarios. The two most

4.3.6 Diocletian

One more emperor warrants discussion, even though he did not rule in proximity to the Pauline period. The anti-Christian emperor Diocletian implemented strong measures against close-kin marital unions (AD 295). He was responding to the local Syrian habit of uncle-niece marriages and also unions between half-siblings. His basis for enacting the law related to his pagan piety, with concern for the well-being of the empire lest the gods bring retribution for incestuous behavior.¹⁷⁸ The declaration labels incestuous marriages as barbaric, polluted, illicit, nefarious, wicked and born out of unrestrained desires.¹⁷⁹ Diocletian's decree makes an explicit appeal to the previous precedent in earlier Roman law, and thus confirms the Roman incest taboo of an earlier period. His decree also illustrates that the Roman incest taboo developed separately from Christianizing influences on the Roman context, for his moral basis was firmly grounded in a pagan religious loyalty. Ironically, Christians were accused of incest via outgroup vilification from Romans who misunderstood the sexual mores of Christ-followers.¹⁸⁰

5 Conclusion

When Paul makes the assertion that the incestuous choices of the immoral man are *τοιαύτη πορνεία ἣτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν* (immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, 1 Cor. 5:1), he clearly cannot be speaking of the knowledge or practice of incest generally among Gentiles.¹⁸¹ Even cursory historical analysis demonstrates either the existence of incest or public discourse on the topic. Neither can Paul be speaking of all Gentiles rejecting incest, as we have examples of many non-Roman Gentiles who tolerated the

prominent examples are the rumor of Nero's incestuous relationship with his mother and Claudius' incestuous marriage to Nero's mother Agrippina. Four other less prominent mentions of incest also underscore Tacitus' ill regard for incestuous practices. He mentions that Nero used the rumor of incest against Salinus (Tac., *Ann.* 16.8), that Cotta Messalinus was accused of beginning incestuous rumors against Caligula (Tac., *Ann.* 6.5), that Sextus Marius was accused of incest with his daughter and was thrown over a cliff (Tac., *Ann.* 6.19) and that a divorced mother's sexual love for her son drove him to commit suicide (Tac., *Ann.* 6.49).

178 Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire*, 140–43.

179 *Mosaicarum et Romanarum Legum Collatio* 5.4.3; cf. Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire*, 142.

180 Wagemakers, "Incest, Infanticide, and Cannibalism," 338–339.

181 This view is largely driven by the textual variant *ὀνομάζεται* in 5:1. Without the variant, this is not a necessary or compelling reading. See discussion in chapter 1.

practice. Rather, Paul speaks of a Roman incest taboo. Thus, the textual variant which supplies the verb *ὀνομάζεται* (1 Cor. 5:1) cannot be taken most literally, though it might still convey the sense that incest was not to be tolerated. The following conclusions might be drawn from the preceding analysis of Roman attitudes toward incest within the Pauline context.

Romans perceived incest as socially unacceptable. Despite Roman endorsement of numerous practices categorized as *πορνεία* in a Jewish perspective, the Romans did not accept incest societally. This prohibition extended more restrictively in familial degree than the Greek customs of preceding centuries. The only apparent exception to this social rejection of incest might potentially be the imperial rulers, but even there the incestuous characterizations were utilized as a literary strategy for denigration rather than producing consistently verifiable factual representations. Whether the factuality of the incest can be proven or not, the way in which the accusations are woven into the narrative makes clear that public opinion rejected the behavior.¹⁸²

Romans codified incest prohibitions into law. Social intolerance for incest indicated general disdain for the practice. Numerous informal means were available for enforcement of the social norm. On the other hand, legal codification expressed social concern that incestuous activity had the propensity for inducing harm. Enforcement was therefore formal, which showed a more pronounced concern for the negative consequences of the particular behavior.

Romans conceived of the incest taboo as a group-forming norm. Incest accusations were frequently used to characterize non-Romans as an expression of outgroup negativity. Such perspective is explicit in Tacitus' account of Vitellius' speech. It also is evident in Roman response to Egyptian practices. The Romans had a longstanding tolerance for deviation among assimilated peoples, as long as such practices did not interfere with Roman priorities. Yet, we have examples of condescension toward incestuous practices as barbaric and uncivilized. Acceptance of incestuous practices was an outgroup activity.

182 The Roman incest taboo parallels modern Western contexts, where a wide range of activities deemed immoral by a Judeo-Christian ethic are acceptable even though a strong incest taboo is retained socially and legally. Yet, it should be noted that parallelism does not mean that both cultures were/are motivated by the same causations. Modern incest taboo has been closely tied to the perception of genetic weaknesses resulting from children born in such relationships. Though this has been rejected by current scientific research trends, there remains a strong attribution of this cause within popular conceptions. Additionally, modern western thinking places strong value on regard for an individual's autonomy. Incestuous relationships are commonly viewed as a predatory practice instead of a mutual choice. Neither the biological disincentive nor the sense of an individual's rights (particularly females) was present in Roman thinking.

Romans sourced incestuous choices in self-interest and lack of self-control. Incestuous relationships resulted from a flaw within the character of a person (whether fictional or historical). When the incestuous relationship was imposed on an individual, one party was seen as a perpetrator of self-interest and the other a victim. In the cases where both parties consented to an incestuous relationship (and this appears to be the case in the Corinthian *ecclesia*), both were viewed as mutually pursuant of self-interest at the expense of the broader community.

The Roman incest taboo was rooted in pagan religious conviction. For Romans, there was a strong sense of violating the sensibilities of the gods and thus bringing ill fortune to the empire in response to incestuous behavior. This is ironic, of course, given the incestuous dalliances of the Roman pantheon. Nonetheless, Romans appealed to the *jus gentium*, a belief that the gods intended the world to be ordered a certain way. They understood incest to be upsetting to the natural ordering of the world.

Some of Paul's clearest language regarding ingroup/outgroup association is contextualized within the circumstances of the incestuous man in Corinth. The strong incest taboo existent in first-century Roman culture escalated incestuous behavior to a place of greater significance. The Corinthian *ecclesia* had many shortcomings, but endorsement of incest within the community diminished their capacity to be a redemptive witness within the culture in a way that other ethical shortcomings did not. Paul was attempting to maintain integration of Christ-followers within the pagan contexts in which they once freely functioned, as he clarifies in 1 Corinthians 5:9–10. On the matter of incest, it is the Roman pagan, finding this practice repugnant and barbaric, who might break fellowship with the Christ-follower. All *πορνεία* is potentially damaging to the individual (cf. 1 Cor. 6:18), but tarnishing the reputation of the *ecclesia* with incest has the added harm of obfuscating witness of the community toward outsiders. The importance of Roman perspective on incest cannot be underestimated in the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13. By endorsing incest in their midst, the Corinthians associated themselves with barbarous outgroups, from the perspective of unbelieving Romans. For Paul, Christ-followers should be dialogically engaged with pagans, though morally distinct. Affirmation of incest within the *ecclesia* threatened both dialogical engagement and moral distinction. The immediate threat to the missional purposes of the *ecclesia* explains why Paul was so urgent in his response. Moreover, the Roman view of incest also explains why Paul dealt with the situation so severely. Expulsion was necessary to reclassify the immoral man as an outgroup member. The cultural values of honor, shame and shamelessness deeply informed the rationale for expulsion, to which chapter 5 gives further attention.

Derogation as Means of Witness

Paul's expulsive advice appears rather harsh, even brash. Pastoral nurture toward a Christ-follower walking in sin seems conspicuously absent in Paul's response. The concern that Paul lacks either self-control, pastoral skill or both is rooted squarely in an interpretive lens which prioritizes individualistic values over collectivistic constructs. In Paul's circumstance, his exhortations would have been informed by the dyadic character of ancient Mediterranean contexts which emphasized the reputation of the group over that of its individual members. Conformance to group norms was paramount, and enforcement of both norms and boundaries was accomplished through the according of honor and shame. Paul acted well within the social conventions of his context when expelling the man from the *ecclesia*, for the man's behavior was a considerable breach of social norms and threatened the identity clarity of the entire *ecclesia*. Derogation and exclusion from the *ecclesia* were strategic means of producing greater clarity as to the nature and purpose of the *ecclesia*, both in the perception of its members and the view of outsiders. This chapter analyzes Paul's exhortation for expulsion in light of the collectivistic viewpoint of ancient Mediterranean culture, showing how the challenge-riposte practices of an honor-oriented culture might bring greater identity clarity to the *ecclesia*. First, the existence of an honor-shame dynamic in Roman culture and the Corinthian correspondence will be identified and explicated. Second, an explanation will be offered for how the honor-shame dynamic greatly intensified the situation in Corinth, especially in the ways in which outsiders would have perceived the incestuous arrangement. Third, the honor-shame dynamic will be used to propose an explanation for why the immoral man and the congregation would have proceeded anomalously in regard to the incest, despite the fact that it would have brought shame from Jew and Gentile alike. Finally, the important role that derogation of deviance had in group boundary maintenance will be applied to the situation of the immoral man.

1 Mediterranean Values of Honor and Shame

Honor was conceptually embedded within the fabric of Roman society. The essentiality of honor was fundamentally assumed. Its value to the individual needed no quantification.¹ As described by Rohrbaugh,

In ancient Mediterranean societies, especially among the socially elite, honor was the passion of all who aspired to excel. One's honor status determined nearly everything in life: how one behaved, interacted with others, dressed, ate, married, and even what happened at the time of death. Public rights and responsibilities, public speech, approved gestures, friends, associates and even the guests one could invite to a meal were all determined by one's place on the scale of honor. It even determined which seat a guest should occupy at a dinner table. Critics complain that it was a craving nearly impossible to control.²

Roman culture received and incorporated earlier Greek articulations of an honor-shame framework for social relations. Homer's epic *The Iliad* is predicated upon the ideal of honor as a noble pursuit.³ In the words of Hector, ἐπεὶ μάθον ἔμμεναι ἐσθλὸς / αἰεὶ καὶ πρῶτοισι μετὰ Τρῳέεσσι μάχεσθαι, / ἄρνύμενος πατρός τε μέγα κλέος ἢ δ' ἐμὸν αὐτοῦ.⁴ Aristotle also gives evidence of honor as desirable in *Rhetoric*. Doing good within society is met with honor: τιμὴ δ' ἐστὶ μὲν σημεῖον εὐεργετικῆς δόξης, τιμῶνται δὲ δικαίως μὲν καὶ μάλιστα οἱ εὐεργετηχότες.⁵ Honor is not acquired only for significant matters, but also for more common

1 On the matter of the implicit integration of honor and shame into first-century AD Mediterranean culture, see deSilva, "Paul, Honor, and Shame," 26–30; Joseph H. Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi: Carmen Christi as Cursus Pudorum*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 132 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 34–50.

2 Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "Honor," in Crook, *The Ancient Mediterranean Social World*, 63.

3 Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *Greek Comedy, Hellenistic Literature, Greek Religion, and Miscellanea: the Academic Papers of Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 253–80.

4 Hom., *Il.* 6.444–446. "I have learnt to excel always and to fight among the foremost Trojans, striving to win great glory for my father and myself." Homer, *Iliad, Volume 1: Books 1–12.*, trans. A.T. Murray, revised by William F. Wyatt, Loeb Classical Library 170 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924), 307.

5 Arist., *Rh.* 1.5.9. "Honor is a token of a reputation for doing good; and those who have already done good are justly and above all honored." Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, trans. J.H. Freese, revised by Gisela Striker, Loeb Classical Library 193 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2020), 53.

matters of everyday discourse: πολλοὶ γὰρ διὰ μικρὰ δοκοῦντα τιμῆς τυγχάνουσιν.⁶ Honor is evidenced through remembrances in verse, privileges, receipt of land and the way in which a person is seated in a public context:

μέρη δὲ τιμῆς θυσίαι, μνήμαι ἐν μέτροις καὶ ἄνευ μέτρων, γέρα, τεμένη, προεδρίαί, τάφοι, εἰκόνες, τροφαὶ δημόσiai.⁷

Even something as common as a gift is a means of awarding honor to another individual: καὶ γὰρ τὸ δῶρόν ἐστι κτήματος δόσις καὶ τιμῆς σημεῖον.⁸

More relevant to understanding Pauline conceptualization of honor are examples from Roman politicians and authors.⁹ In addressing the topic of pain in the *Tusculan Disputations*, Cicero asserted that honor motivates bravery and sacrifice in battle, causing a soldier to disregard both pain and the potential of death:

Ad ferendum igitur dolorem placide atque sedate plurimum proficit toto pectore, ut dicitur, cogitare, quam id honestum sit. Sumus enim natura, ut ante dixi—dicendum est enim saepius—studiosissimi adpetentissimique honestatis, cuius si quasi lumen aliquod aspeximus, nihil est quod, ut eo potiamur, non parati simus et ferre et perpeti. Ex

6 Arist., *Rh.* 1.5.9. “for many obtain honor for things that appear trifling” Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, 53.

7 Arist., *Rh.* 1.5.9. “The components of honor are sacrifices, memorials in verse and prose, privileges, grants of land, front seats, public burial, statues, state maintenance.” Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, 53.

8 Arist., *Rh.* 1.5.9. “For a gift is at once a giving of a possession and a token of honor.” Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, 53.

9 Pitt-Rivers, “Honour and Social Status,” 61–73; McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome*, 12–14; Barton, *Roman Honor*, 11–17; Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 95–103; Joseph H. Hellerman, “The Humiliation of Christ in the Social World of Roman Philippi, Part 1,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 160, July–September (2003): 323. In matters of cultural characteristics such as honor and shame, it is always important to consider whether the sources available for historical analysis are indicative of broad-based cultural realities rather than representative of the more limited vantage of the sources themselves. The attribution of a value within antiquity is informed by analysis of how uniformly the cultural observation might be applied across various strata of society when evidence of the cultural phenomenon derives from sources representing the higher social status. This topic has been given ample consideration in the scholarship noted above and will not be evaluated further here. Whereas Pitt-Rivers considers the issue primarily from an anthropological point of view, McGinn evaluates the application of the anthropological observations regarding honor and shame within the framework of historical analysis. He concludes that the anthropological principles might be employed successfully even if there is further research to be done regarding nuanced differentiation of honor and shame across socio-economic spectrums of antiquity.

hoc cursu atque impetu animorum ad veram laudem atque honestatem illa pericula adeuntur in proeliis, non sentiunt viri fortes in acie volnera, vel sentiunt, sed mori malunt quam tantum modo de dignitatis gradu demoveri.¹⁰

Dio Chrysostom addressed the people of Rhodes regarding their habit of reusing honorific statues. Instead of undertaking the expense and time of commissioning a new statue, the words of attribution were being chiseled out and inscribed once again. According to Dio's argument, this eliminated the instructive value of honoring the patrons of the past.¹¹ The desire to be known, even after death, was an outgrowth of the pursuit of honor which was endemic within Roman society. Dio explains in his thirty-first oration:

πλὴν ἐκεῖνό γε δῆλόν ἐστιν ὅτι μήτε ὑμεῖς μήτε ἄλλοι τινές, οἱ δοκοῦσιν Ἑλλήνων ἢ βαρβάρων μεγάλοι γενέσθαι, δι' ἄλλο τι προήλθον εἰς δόξαν καὶ δύναμιν ἢ τῶν κατὰ μέρος φιλοτίμων τυχόντες καὶ περὶ πλείονος τοῦ ζῆν ἡγούμενων τὴν ὕστερον εὐφημίαν. ἡ γὰρ στήλη καὶ τὸ ἐπίγραμμα καὶ τὸ χαλκοῦν ἐστάναι μέγα δοκεῖ τοῖς γενναίοις ἀνδράσι, καὶ μισθὸς οὗτος ἄξιος τῆς ἀρετῆς τὸ μὴ μετὰ τοῦ σώματος ἀνηρῆσθαι τὸ ὄνομα μηδ' εἰς ἴσον καταστῆναι τοῖς μὴ γενομένοις, ἀλλὰ ἔχνος τι λιπέσθαι καὶ σημεῖον, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις, τῆς ἀνδραγαθίας.¹²

- 10 Cic., *Tusc.* 2.24.58. "To enable us to bear pain quietly and calmly it is a very great gain to reflect with all our heart and mind, as the saying is, how honourable it is to do so. Nature has made us, as I have said before—it must often be repeated—enthusiastic seekers after honour, and once we have caught, as it were, some glimpse of its radiance, there is nothing we are not prepared to bear and go through in order to secure it. It is from this rush, this impulse of our souls towards true renown and reputation that the dangers of battle are encountered; brave men do not feel wounds in the line of battle, or feel them, but prefer death rather than move a step from the post that honour has appointed." Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations.*, trans. J.E. King, Loeb Classical Library 141 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), 213.
- 11 C. Bailey, "Honor' in Rhodes: Dio Chrysostom's Thirty-First Oration," *Illinois Classical Studies* 40, no. 1 (2015): 46–48. In this sense, Dio's narrative makes a connection between the Greek usage of honor and the Roman usage contemporary to his day. See also C.P. Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom*, Loeb Classical Monographs (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 26–35.
- 12 Dio Chrys., *Or.* 31.20. "However, this much is clear, that neither you nor any others, whether Greeks or barbarians, who are thought to have become great, advanced to glory and power for any other reason than because fortune gave to each in succession men who were jealous of honour and regarded their fame in after times as more precious than life. For the pillar, the inscription, and being set up in bronze are regarded as a high honour by noble men, and they deem it a reward worthy of their virtue not to have their name destroyed along with their body can to be brought level with those who have never lived at all, but rather to leave an imprint and a token, so to speak, of their manly prowess."

Seneca the Younger indicated that honor in and of itself was a worthy pursuit: “Fixum illud est, a quo in cetera probationes nostrae exeunt, honestum ob nullam aliam causam, quam quia honestum sit, coli.”¹³ Honor was embedded even into the vocabulary of the societal structure. Ranking officeholders were termed as *honores*, and offices were only filled by people of *dignitas*, a term to describe persons of status as a result of certain economic privileges.¹⁴

The themes of honor and shame are essential constructs for understanding the urgency and severity of the apostle Paul. The immoral man brought shame to the *ecclesia* through his incestuous relationship. Paul was obligated to protect the honor of the *ecclesia* by expulsion of the immoral man. Beyond that, the anomalous endorsement of incest by the *ecclesia* can also be explained by their misapplication of Pauline constructs of honor and shame. Before the connections between honor and shame are made to 1 Corinthians 5:1–13, a summary of the definitional aspects of honor and shame as they relate to the biblical contexts is in order.

1.1 Honor

Honor might be described as an individual's self-perception of his or her personal worth along with an appraisal by others of the contribution one makes to his or her ingroup.¹⁵ Seneca the Younger depicts the relationship of individual to group in his *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium*: “Claritas autem ista bonorum virorum secunda opinio est. Nam quomodo fama non est unius sermo nec

Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses 31–36.*, trans. J.W. Cohoon, H. Lamar Crosby, Loeb Classical Library 358 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), 23–25.

13 Sen., *Ben.* 4.16.2. “The one fixed principle from which we proceed to the proof of other points is that the honourable is cherished for no other reason than because it is honourable.” Seneca, *Moral Essays, Volume III: De Beneficiis.*, trans. John W. Basore, Loeb Classical Library 310 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), 237.

14 Frederik J. Vervaet, “Honour and Shame in the Roman Republic,” in *Eurasian Empires in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Contact and Exchange between the Graeco-Roman World, Inner Asia and China*, ed. Hyun J. Kim, Frederik Vervaet and Selim F. Adal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 85.

15 Rohrbaugh defines honor as “the status one claimed in the community, together with the all-important public recognition of that claim.” Rohrbaugh, “Honor,” 63. Malina's definition of honor is “the value of a person in his or her own eyes plus the value of that person in the eyes of his or her social group.” Malina, *The New Testament World*, 52. David A. deSilva's definition emphasizes the group connection slightly more than Rohrbaugh and Malina. He notes that honor is “the esteem in which a person is held by the group he or she regards as significant others—it is the recognition by that person's group that he or she is a valuable member of that group.” deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 25. See also Halvor Moxnes, “Honor and Shame,” in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard L. Rohrbaugh (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 20.

infamia unius mala existimatio, sic nec claritas uni bono placuisse. Consentire in hoc plures insignes et spectabiles viri debent, ut claritas sit.”¹⁶ The granting and receiving of honor involves three parties. Any person in society can lay claim to a measure of respect or recognition from others. The right to gain such respect relates to factors such as a person’s gender, age, positional authority or status within the social context.¹⁷

The first party involved in such an honor exchange is the person seeking honor and the second person is the individual from whom honor is sought. In an honor-shame framework, honor is a limited good. When an individual gains honor, he does so at the cost of honor to another person. If honor could be gained without diminishing honor to another individual, there would be plenty enough to go around, and it would be less valuable to those contending for it.¹⁸ The exchange between the party which challenges and the party which responds is an observable social interaction. It is the opinion of these observers (the third party in the social interaction) which matters when determining when honor is lost or gained. Dio Chrysostom suggests that the men are always and constantly on trial for their reputation and that the jury is not composed of trained individuals who adjudicate with precision. Determinations are made at a drinking party or in casual conversation at the baths:

ὁ περὶ τῆς δόξης ἀγὼν οὐκ αἰεὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τοῖς ἀνοήτοις ἐνέστηκεν, οὐ μόνον ἅπαξ τῆς ἡμέρας, ἀλλὰ πολλάκις, οὐδὲ ἐφ’ ὀρισμένοις δικασταῖς, ἀλλὰ πᾶσιν ἀπλῶς, καὶ τούτοις ἀνωμότοις καὶ μῆτε μαρτύρων ἐπιστρεφόμενοις μῆτε τεκμηρίων; μῆτε γὰρ εἰδότες μῆτε ἀκούοντες μῆτε λαχόντες δικάζουσι, καὶ οὐδὲν αὐτοῖς διαφέρει πίνουσιν ἢ λουομένοις τὴν ψῆφον φέρειν.¹⁹

16 Sen., *Ep.* 102.8. “Yet this renown, of which you speak, is simply the favourable opinion of good men. For just as reputation does not consist of one person’s remarks, and as ill repute does not consist of one person’s disapproval, so renown does not mean that we have merely pleased one good person. In order to constitute renown, the agreement of many distinguished and praiseworthy men is necessary.” Seneca, *Epistles, Volume III: Epistles 93–124*, 173.

17 Arist., *Eth. Nic.* 1165a21–35 regarding effect of familial relationship, age and class on honor claims; Herod. 1.134 for example of how social ranking affects honor; Philo, *Jos.* 203–4 regarding how age affected honor ratings in antiquity; Gell., *NA* 2.2.1–10 on the way in which political office and age/family status interface in honor grants.

18 Malina, *The New Testament World*, 32–33; deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 28–29; Finney, *Honour and Conflict in the Ancient World*, 29–30; Zeba A. Crook, “Honor, Shame, and Social Status Revisited,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128, no. 3 (2009): 593.

19 Dio Chrys., *Or.* 66.17–19. “Is not the trial concerning reputation always in progress wherever there are men—that is, foolish men—not merely once a day but many times, and not before a definite panel of judges but before all men without distinction, and, moreover, men not bound by oath, men without regard for either witness or evidence? For they

Honor is not inherently accessible, as if it is a commodity which can be bought and sold. It is awarded by those who witness the contention between individuals for honor.²⁰

This third party in the exchange of honor is often referred to as the court of public opinion. Antiquity provides numerous accounts of such interactions, an example of which might be found in Augustus' *Res Gestae*. This document boasts the accomplishments of Augustus for the purpose of justifying the honor which should be accorded to him. While the entire inscription focuses on his political contributions, Augustus' discussion of honorific statues is especially instructive:

In templis omnium civitátium pr(ovinci)ae Asiae victor ornallmenta reposui, quae spoliatis possederat. § Statuae (mea)e pedestres et equestres et in | quadrigis argenteae steterunt in urbe xxc circiter, quas ipse | sustuli (§) exque ea pecunia dona aurea in aede Apol(li)nis meo nomi|ne et illorum, qui mihi statuárum honorem habuerunt, posui.²¹

Here Augustus challenges the honor of his opponent by restoring that which had been taken from temples during the war. He melts down the statues erected in honor of him as Caesar so as to make restitution to the gods. In the process, he is careful to give proper recognition to those who have commissioned the statues in his honor. He presents his accomplishments, being cautious not to dismiss the honor accorded him by his patrons. He affirms that honor is due to him and that the statues were rightly made on his behalf. Nonetheless, there was greater need to accord honor to the gods by melting the statues and remaking them for purpose of the divine cult. Even though he felt the necessity

sit in judgment without either having knowledge of the case or listening to testimony or having been chosen by lot, and it makes no difference to them if they cast their vote at a drinking bout or the bath." Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses 61–80. Fragments. Letters.*, trans. H. Lamar Crosby, Loeb Classical Library 385 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), 105–7.

20 Malina, *The New Testament World*, 31; Crook, "Honor, Shame, and Social Status Revisited," 594.

21 *RGDA* 24. "After my victory I replaced in the temples in all the cities of the province of Asia the ornaments which my antagonist in the war, when he despoiled the temples, had appropriated to his private use. Silver statues of me, on foot, on horseback, and in chariots were erected in the city to the number of about eighty; these I myself removed, and from the money thus obtained I placed in the temple of Apollo golden offerings in my own name and in the name of those who had paid me the honour of a statue." Velleius Paterculus, *Compendium of Roman History. Res Gestae Divi Augusti.*, trans. Frederick W. Shipley, Loeb Classical Library 152 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924), 385.

to remove the statues made to honor him, he acknowledges the importance of the court of public opinion in granting that honor.²² The awarding and receiving of honor was a delicate and complex negotiation in Roman culture, involving aspects of individual identity, social identity and religious beliefs.

The judgments made within the court of public opinion are informed by the social norms of the group. When the individual seeking honor behaved in expected ways—that is, according to social norms—he typically received the recognition sought after. When this respect was granted, honor had been acquired. This concept of honor was so binding as to supersede the most severe of punishments. Livy noted that Roman citizens exercising appeal under the Valerian Law could not be executed or beaten, for the harshest penalty for wrongdoing was a declaration of the act as shamefully inappropriate:

Valeria lex cum eum, qui provocasset virgis caedi securique necari vetuisset, si quis adversus ea fecisset, nihil ultra quam “improbe factum” adiecit. Id, qui tum pudor hominum erat, visum, credo, vinculum satis validum legis.²³

Livy emphasizes the importance of this honor code by his use of the term *disciplina Romana*, which were “formalized and ritualized behaviors of the culture.”²⁴ Honor was generally awarded to an individual in two ways. He could gain honor by virtue of something that was given to him (in contrast to contending for honor by a particular action he took). This is labeled *ascribed honor* and an example would be birth into a wealthy, high-status family. Alternatively, he could gain honor by virtue of earning it, either through a recognizably virtuous act or via social interaction where the individual agonistically gained the upper hand over another. This is labeled *acquired honor*. The process of agonistically striving for honor occurred in challenge-response exchanges.

22 See also Robert Jewett, “Paul, Shame and Honor,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, ed. J.P. Sampley (Harrisburg: A & C Black, 2003), 554–55.

23 Livy, *Epit.* 10.9.6. “The Valerian law, having forbidden that he who had appealed should be scourged with rods or beheaded, merely provided that if anyone should disregard these injunctions it should be deemed a wicked act. This seemed, I suppose, a sufficiently strong sanction of the law, so modest were men in those days.” Livy, *History of Rome, Volume IV: Books 8–10.*, trans. B.O. Foster, Loeb Classical Library 191 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926), 389–91. Note that Livy does make a qualification following the quote above, that his times may have seen a downgrade in terms of the effect of valor; however, I take this as metaphorical rumination over generational changes rather than an abrogation of the principle.

24 Barton, *Roman Honor*, 23. C.f Livy, *Epit.* 22.3.4.

These interactions were carried out at high and low levels, as was appropriate to the situation.

1.2 *Shame*

If honor is the agonistic gain of recognition, then logically shame is the loss of honor. The concept of shame incorporates a constructive awareness on the part of a person regarding how he or she is perceived within the court of public opinion.²⁵ A group member might be “seen as less than valuable because one has behaved in ways that run contrary to the values of the group.”²⁶ In fact, the concept of social shame is established upon the idea that an individual’s relationship to the social context is regarded as important to that person’s identity, both individual and social. Shame is the attention which an individual provides to the way others regard that person’s choices. As Barton has noted, “To have shame was the quality of a modest (*modestus*), a continent (*continens*), a temperate (*temperans*), an innocuous (*innocens*) man or woman, perpetually assessing his or her own value and limitations in relation to others.”²⁷ Shame is thereby a positive social construct by which ingroup members are held accountable to the agreed-upon social norms.²⁸

Having shame was something well regarded, whereas being shamed was a humiliating experience. The practice of shaming is a means of social control whereby norms are reinforced. Awareness of the consequences of deviation serve as a strong incentive for behavioral choices which contribute to the well-being of the group. This is why honor-shame cultures often display tendencies toward a collectivistic orientation over individualism. Healthy shame

25 “As a Mediterranean cultural value, shame is closely related to honor, but shame and honor are not binary opposites. ... A profusion of shame is extremely undesirable; however, the complete lack of shame is equally undesirable. The possession of a sense of shame allows a person to understand his or her role in society and to live appropriately within that role.” Ronald D. Roberts, “Shame,” in Crook, *The Ancient Mediterranean Social World*, 79.

26 deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 25. As defined by Malina, shame “is to be thwarted or obstructed in one’s personal claim to worth or status, along with one’s recognition of loss of status involved in this rejection.” Malina, *The New Testament World*, 50.

27 Barton, *Roman Honor*, 210.

28 “Therefore, having shame is a positive value, demonstrated through sensitivity to the court of public opinion, appropriate deference to social superiors, and demonstrating a sense of propriety. Shame can even function as a form of honor, such as when a person expresses deference toward a social superior or when a woman’s modesty (often referred to as her shame) gains her the reputation in these cultures of being a good, moral, or honorable woman.” Roberts, “Shame,” 79.

is an affirmation that the perception of the group matters to the individual.²⁹ It is for this reason that Paul addresses both the immoral man and the Corinthian *ecclesia*. The man's choices have implication for the group and the group's choices have implications regarding how they are perceived within the broader pagan context of Corinth.

1.3 *Shamelessness*

Shame and being shamed might both be distinguished from shamelessness. The latter describes an individual who ceases to have shame—that is, a person who lacks concern for his conformance to group norms.³⁰ This person no longer expresses any regard for the court of public opinion in which honor is accorded. He wantonly pursues that which lies outside the social norms without esteem for the effect on the individuals or the group with which he associates. As described by Roman historian Carlin A. Barton, “Loss of reputation without the possibility of redemption could result in the Roman’s despising his or her degradation. It could result in the Roman being *effrenatus*, *dissolutus*, loosed from his or her moorings and from the mutual ties and obligations that bound him or her to other people.”³¹ Romans considered such a person dangerous to society. Without the controls which shame brought to an individual, the person was likely to act in ways that damaged himself or others.³² The shameless person had no regard even for the law itself. The appropriate response toward a shameless person was to refuse acknowledgment of membership in the group. The shameless person’s refusal to heed boundaries meant that he is no longer categorized with the group by those boundaries: “To show courtesy to a shameless person makes one a fool, since it is foolish to show respect for boundaries when a person acknowledges no boundaries.”³³ The intention of shaming should be reformatory. Excessive shaming may push an individual toward shamelessness rather than bringing about productive change. In

29 Pilch and Malina, *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, 89; Dennis Duling and Richard Rohrbaugh, “Collectivism,” in Crook, *The Ancient Mediterranean Social World*, 93–96.

30 Moxnes, “Honor and Shame,” 22; Richard L. Rohrbaugh, “Honor: Core Value in the Biblical World,” in Neufeld and DeMaris, *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*; Halvor Moxnes, “Honor and Shame,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin: Journal of Bible and Culture* 23, no. 4 (1993); Roberts, “Shame,” 85–87.

31 Barton, *Roman Honor*, 259.

32 “In antiquity most people believed that persons such as prostitutes, innkeepers, sailors, tax collectors and actors, among others, were irreversibly shameless because their occupations loudly announced they did not possess the needed sensitivity for their own honor. They did not respect the boundaries or norms of the community’s honor system and thus threatened social chaos.” Rohrbaugh, “Honor,” 113.

33 Malina, *The New Testament World*, 49; cf. Roberts, “Shame,” 79.

antiquity, there was a delicate pedagogical balance in shaming. One needed to avoid the hopeless resignation which might yield to shamelessness.³⁴ We can see in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 how Paul carefully balances rebuke with the potential of restoration and redemption.

1.4 *Dyadic Nature of Honor/Shame*

Subjective group dynamics, a subset of social identity research which considers how a group responds to individuals who deviate from group norms, proves helpful in understanding the dyadic nature of honor and shame within the Corinthian context. Mediterranean cultural concepts of honor and shame were a means by which group identity was inculcated and group norms enforced. Those who deviated from the social norms of society (or a smaller subgroup) were subject to derogation. If the deviating individual were embraced as an ingroup member in good standing, the group's boundaries would lack clarity, both for ingroup and outgroup members. Subjective group dynamics explains the psychological impetus behind the social phenomena observable in the honor-shame dynamic. The interpreter of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 needs to exegete with the assumption that honor and shame shaped group-forming norms in the Corinthian context. Examining Paul's response to the immoral man and the Corinthian *ecclesia* through the lens of both honor/shame and modern social psychology provides an effective onramp into the text itself.

Both social identity perspective and the honor-shame cultural orientation affirm the significance of group norms for identity.³⁵ The boundary-defining

34 Te-Li Lau, *Defending Shame: Its Formative Power in Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 100–101.

35 Brooklynn A. Welden, "Restoring Lost 'Honor': Retrieving Face and Identity, Removing Shame, and Controlling the Familial Cultural Environment Through 'Honor' Murder," *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences* 2, no. 1 (2010): 358–86. Welden's study on honor killings among immigrants is instructive for considering the dialogical intersection of honor-based cultures with the social psychological phenomenon described by the black sheep effect. The phenomenon of honor killings might be explained in terms of the extreme honor challenge presented by a child who is embracing new aspects of identity in an immigrant culture. The loss of honor is doubled, first by the behavior which deviates from cultural norms and second by the challenge to the father which removes honor from a superior. In honor-based societies, the challenge-riposte cycle is instigated and the father responds with an equally extreme honor challenge. The same phenomenon might be explained in terms of the black sheep effect and social identity. The child has nested social identities: child of an immigrant who adheres to cultural practices of the homeland and also an individual who is integrating into the mainstream of the society in which the family now resides. Such integration is viewed by the father as the child's deviation from the family's ingroup norms. In accordance with the black sheep effect, harsh derogation is required since the child's behavior threatens the identity of the

norms of social identity correspond to the behavior adjudicated within the court of public opinion. An individual's perceived similarity to others serves as the basis for group formation. These similarities are deeper than ethnicity or language. They revolve around shared beliefs and practices, which can be described as norms once they are appraised positively by a group. An honor-shame framework acknowledges the existence of shared ideals and behavioral norms as a prerequisite for navigating the distribution and withdrawal of honor from individuals within the society since the granting of honor is determined largely by the social norms of a particular context. Once a group norm is determined, deviation from that expectation can create shame.³⁶

Both social identity perspective and the honor-shame cultural orientation also assume the value of connectedness. In social identity, this connectedness is a product of self-categorization within a grouping. In an honor-shame framework, shame exists precisely because a person has concern for whether he fits within the group to which he is attached. Lack of conformance to the group norms leads to a sense of detachment. The boundedness of an individual within a social group is exactly what enables shame to exist. As Barton notes in her description,

Shame was the emotion of relatedness. One had shame before someone (or the thought of someone) to whom one wished to be bound, with whom one wished to be associated or identified: the gods, one's ancestors or elders, one's parents, one's master, one's spouse, one's siblings, one's fellow citizens, one's friends, one's lover, or one's children. Conversely, a bond or shared identity awakened one's sense of shame.³⁷

The significance of shared group-level fate is heightened in collectivistic cultural contexts. Practices related to honor and shame become a means by which group identity is mediated and enforced. Of particular significance is the use of exemplars—both positive and negative—to bring definition to the group

family. Thus, it can be seen how social identity theory and honor-shame cultural perspective align and intersect even though they are not identical constructs. For an example of application of anthropological studies of honor and shame to social identity theory, see also Charles Stewart, "Honor and Shame," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences*, 2nd ed., ed. James D. Wright, 1 vol. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2015), 181–84. For an explanation of how the practice of honor killing was evidenced in the biblical narrative of Jesus birth, see Matthew J. Marohl, "Matthew," in Tucker and Kuecker, *T&T Clark Social Identity Commentary on the New Testament*, 30–31.

36 deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 25.

37 Barton, *Roman Honor*, 207–8.

and also to encourage the perpetuation of group norms. Both honor-shame cultural orientation and social identity perspective elevate prototypical figures as worthy of emulation while denigrating rule-breakers as dangerous. The negative aspects of prototypically are at work as well via derogation. When the honor of the group is challenged by non-conforming individuals, such figures are chastised so as to caution other groups members against their behavior.³⁸ During Imperial Roman rule, such consequences were referred to as *exilium*, *relegatio* and *delegatio*.³⁹ Evidence of such practices is found in the *Digest*:

Publicorum iudiciorum quaedam capitalia sunt, quaedam non capitalia. Capitalia sunt, ex quibus poena mors aut exilium est, hoc est aquae et ignis interdictio: per has enim poenas eximitur caput de civitate. Nam cetera non exilia, sed relegationes proprie dicuntur: tunc enim civitas retinetur. Non capitalia sunt, ex quibus pecuniaria aut in corpus aliqua coercitio poena est.⁴⁰

Describing the phenomenon in the language of social identity, honorable group members are prototypical figures while deviant members are black sheep. Deviant group members at the edge of norm conformance are treated more harshly than those outside the group for similar behavior. We have just such an example here in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13. Paul in no way endorses the immorality of the pagan outgroup, but nonetheless his response to the immorality of the ingroup member is harsh so as to emphasize how the deviation threatens the identity of the group.

1.5 *Honor and Shame in the Corinthian Correspondence*

Paul appeals explicitly to honor and shame throughout the Corinthian correspondence. An overview of Paul's usage of honor and shame within the letter will set the stage for further analysis of how these concepts factor into the response to the situation of the immoral man. Paul begins his letter with an

38 deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 41–42; Giovanni Bazzana, “Deviance,” in Crook, *The Ancient Mediterranean Social World*, 289.

39 Daniel A. Washburn, *Banishment in the Later Roman Empire, 284–476 CE*, Routledge Studies in Ancient History 5 (New York: Routledge, 2013), 5.

40 *Dig.* 48.1.2. “Some criminal proceedings are capital while others are not. Capital [proceedings] are those where the penalty is death or exile, which here means interdiction from fire and water, because by these penalties civil status is taken away. Other [sentences] are not properly referred to as exile but as relegation; for in them citizenship is retained. Noncapital [proceedings] are those where the penalty is a fine or some form of corporal punishment.” Alan Watson, ed., *The Digest of Justinian*, 4 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 309.

appeal to shame. The Corinthians are seeking honor through association with those who are powerful, well-born and of high social status. God, however, evaluates that which is honorable by a different standard than that of the world: ἀλλὰ τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός, ἵνα καταισχύνῃ τοὺς σοφοὺς, καὶ τὰ ἀσθενῆ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός, ἵνα καταισχύνῃ τὰ ἰσχυρὰ (but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 1 Cor. 1:27). God shames the wise and the strong. Later in the letter, Paul is the one who shames the Corinthians: πρὸς ἐντροπὴν ὑμῖν λέγω (I say this to your shame, 1 Cor. 6:5 and repeated in 1 Cor. 15:34).⁴¹ In all three situations, shaming is a positive action as long as the desired effect brings glory to Christ. In 1 Corinthians 11:4–6, 13–15 we find yet another example of Paul's positive view of shame. He appeals to a commonly accepted norm regarding hair to make his point regarding head coverings in worship.⁴² A praying man with a head covering dishonors his head, and likewise a praying woman without a head covering also dishonors her head. He and the Corinthians might agree on this point based on accepted expectations. Deviance from this norm caused healthy shame.

Of course, Paul does regard shame as something which might be used inappropriately as well. Two such examples within the Corinthian correspondence (1 Cor. 4:14, 11:22) warrant closer examination, lest they be interpreted as Paul's condemnation of shame as something to be avoided altogether within the *ecclesia*. In 1 Corinthians 4:14a, Paul states that he does not intend to shame the Corinthians. The latter part of the verse (1 Cor. 4:14b) is the key to understanding his sentiment here, in that he chooses to admonish the Corinthians in distinction to shaming them. The subtle, yet important, point here is that shame is intended as a pedagogical tool to train the community in righteousness (i.e., norm conformance to God's divine standards). Paul contrasts his choice to admonish with a form of shaming present in the worldly agonistic contention for honor, such as what went on in the courts of Corinth (1 Cor. 6:1–11). The use of shame is penultimate, and it is intended for use when admonishment is ineffective in facilitating obedience to Christ. Thus, 1 Corinthians 4:14 should not be read as a negative reference to shame, but rather as an argument for focused

41 1 Corinthians 15:34 reads πρὸς ἐντροπὴν ὑμῖν λαλῶ in P46 B D P Ψ 0246. 33. 81. 365. 630. 1175. 1241. 1505. 1739. 2464., but λέγω in A F G K L 075. 104. 1881. M. The parallel is observable either way, whether identical or approximate.

42 Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 844–45. Thiselton argues that the term ἡ φύσις is not indicative of the natural order as much as it is explaining the way life is ordered in the current context. This interpretation avoids confusions related to the non-universal appraisal of hair length as having some unchangeable meaning.

usage of shame for a positive ecclesiological effect.⁴³ In 1 Corinthians 11:22, Paul chastises high-status Corinthians for shaming lower-status Christ-followers in their commemoration of the Lord's Supper. In this instance, the practice of shaming only contends for the personal honor of some rather than serving as a tool for the edification of the body as a whole. Such use of shame violates the principles propounded in 1 Corinthians 12:14–26 where Paul describes the *ecclesia* as a human body. Certain members of the body may not downgrade the value of other members of the body by calling them less honorable.⁴⁴ In the Pauline construct, shame can be used either to good or ill effect. Paul is against inappropriately directed shame or shame caused by an incorrect standard in the court of public opinion (i.e., unapprised by divine values). Nevertheless, Paul believes that shame can be used constructively to shape someone into the character of Christ.

2 Honor, Shame and Derogation in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13

In 1 Corinthians 5:1–13, honor and shame are both cause and solution for this situation in Corinth. The immoral man brought immense shame upon the *ecclesia* as a result of his ethical choices—or at least his actions should have according to the cultural rubric. Nevertheless, the man seems undaunted by this sense of shame. He continued to pursue this course of action without remorse or apparent concern, even though the information about his incestuous relationship is "Ὅλως ἀκούεται (well known [own translation], 1 Cor. 5:1). Moreover, the *ecclesia* has endorsed the man's behavior, despite strong condemnation of the practice from both a Roman and Jewish standpoint. In view of historical and sociological evidence regarding the prohibition of incest, the actions of the man and the *ecclesia* are left wanting for an explanation. Why did the man engage in such shameful behavior? Why did the *ecclesia* support him? The starting point for analysis is an understanding of just how profoundly honor and shame would have factored into the choices made by both parties.

43 Lau, *Defending Shame*, 95–99; Arthur J. Dewey, "A Matter of Honor: A Social-Historical Analysis of 2 Corinthians 10," *Harvard Theological Review* 78 (1985): 211–215.

44 Examples of honor/shame framework might also be drawn from 2 Corinthians 9:4 where Paul expresses concern regarding potential shame in the event that the Corinthians had not made good on his boast that they would have an offering prepared upon arrival in Corinth (cf. Downing, "Honor' among Exegetes," 54). Also, 2 Corinthians 12:1–6 where Paul defends himself against the accusation that he ought to be ashamed because his claims (inappropriate boasting) did not fit his status. Cf. Dewey, "A Matter of Honor," 211–12.

Paul is concerned about the shame which the immoral man has brought on the *ecclesia*, and he is concerned about outsider perception of shamelessness for the *ecclesia*.

2.1 *Paul's Multifaceted Concern Regarding Shame*

The honor-shame dynamic informs Paul's view about how the man shames the *ecclesia* by dishonoring his obligations within kinship and patronage bonds. The immoral man would have brought shame in three relationships: to his earthly father, to the family of faith and to Jesus as his patron (not to mention Paul as the representative of Jesus within the *ecclesia*). His incestuous relationship was not simply a sinful transgression or cultural indiscretion; it was a complicated choice with multiple layers of social implication. Paul is disconcerted that the man would disregard these social obligations. Understanding the ways in which the honor-shame dynamic informs the nature of the group identity aids in explaining Paul's response to the situation.

2.1.1 Actual Family/Father

The immoral man had shamed his family and dishonored his father by engaging in a socially unacceptable practice. It is not possible to know whether the immoral man's father was living or deceased, but this is no matter in terms of explaining the likelihood of shame.⁴⁵ Both scenarios present circumstances where extreme dishonor would have been accorded. If the father were living but divorced, the son would have been committing incest. Marriage to a step-mother was forbidden even after the bonds of the parental relationship had been dissolved. If the father were living and remained married to the step-mother, the son would have been committing both adultery and incest. On the other hand, if the father was deceased, then the son was denigrating the memory of his father and simultaneously committing incest illegally. In each of the potential scenarios, the son was challenging the honor of his father—an action which was culturally inappropriate and ethically wrong for multiple reasons. For one, the son was of lower status than the father and thus should not challenge someone with greater honor. For two, honor challenges were intended for persons outside the family unit. Internal challenges were entirely inappropriate (for the same reasons that Paul castigates the *ecclesia* for lawsuits among members in 1 Cor. 6:1–11). To these points might be added that Roman honor within families was closely associated with the man's ability to protect

45 Cf. discussion by Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 234.

the sexual purity of his wife and daughters.⁴⁶ An internally sourced violation of a female's honor was a serious affront and deeply shameful.

2.1.2 Fictive Kinship/Ecclesia

The immoral man had also shamed the *ecclesia* (his fictive kin group) by his actions, bringing corporate shame to all and inhibiting witness among outsiders. Paul analogized the *ecclesia* in many ways, but the use of familial language to explain the fundamental nature of the group has a significant connection to the principles of honor and shame.⁴⁷ The choices of the immoral man reflect not only on him as an individual but also on the collective whole. This dynamic would have serious implications for any group, but all the more when the group applied the social rules of a Roman family to their self-conceptualization and practices.⁴⁸ The Roman kinship construct readily included a more extensive fabric of connections than the nuclear family, people related not only through blood but also through authoritative and obligatory relationships such as a slave to a master.⁴⁹ Additionally, Romans were accustomed to the metaphorical application of kinship constructs. Examples include the fatherly relationship of a patron to a client or the description of a senator as *patres*.⁵⁰ Thus the Pauline configuration of *ecclesia* as family would not have been an unfamiliar application of the metaphor for gentile converts. The first-century Mediterranean family was an especially tightly knit ingroup. Challenges to the honor of one member affected each member of the family. Conversely, shameful or shameless behavior on the part of any ingroup member had far-reaching implications for each person in the family unit.⁵¹ By emphasizing the familial connectedness

46 Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity*, 212–16.

47 Erin K. Vearncombe, “Kinship,” in Crook, *The Ancient Mediterranean Social World*, 26.

48 Vearncombe, “Kinship,” 27.

49 Mario Lentano, “Kinship,” in *The World through Roman Eyes: Anthropological Approaches to Ancient Culture*, ed. Maurizio Bettini and William M. Short (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 171–75.

50 Lentano, “Kinship,” 184. Romans grouped themselves according to *gens*, each of which was marked by certain characteristics or practices.

51 The familial interconnectivity of the members of the *ecclesia* is emphasized by Paul in others ways as well within 1 Corinthians. For instance, he conceives of the *ecclesia* as a human body, where each part is dependent upon and organically connected to the other parts. Rejoicing and sorrow alike are shared by the body, even if the joy or sorrow is experienced by an individual part of the body (1 Cor. 12:12–26). The body analogy might be connected to the kinship metaphor if read in light of Ephesians 5:22–33 where the joining of two persons in matrimony (appealing to both the body analogy and kinship metaphor simultaneously) is connected to ecclesiological assertions. Additionally, Paul appeals to the collective identity of the *ecclesia* through Eucharistic imagery in 1 Corinthians 5:6–8 and 1 Corinthians 11:23–34. Here the common cup resonates with the body analogy by

of each Christ-follower in the Corinthian *ecclesia* to the immoral man, Paul brings the full weight of his shame to bear in the lives of each individual, and more importantly to the *ecclesia* as a whole.

2.1.3 Super Patron/Jesus

Furthermore, the immoral man had shamed Jesus, the patron of the *ecclesia* and Paul who is Jesus' emissary. Paul makes a carefully threaded argument in 1 Corinthians 1–4 as he addresses the divisions present in the Corinthian *ecclesia*. Derek M. McNamara proposes that the sectarianism which Paul confronts in the Corinthian *ecclesia* is related to issues of patronage. Paul's rhetorical strategy is to present Jesus as the ultimate patron of the *ecclesia*. The sectarian loyalties surfaced in the patronal relationships should thus yield to the ultimate patronage which all believers have in connection with Christ.⁵² Paul positions himself as the apostle of Christ in the *ecclesia*, giving himself mediated authority, which is encapsulated in his reference to fatherhood (1 Cor. 4:15). This idea is furthermore evident in 1 Corinthians 5:4 where Paul is present in spirit with the power of the Lord.⁵³ Both patronage and fatherhood were understood in terms of the kinship metaphor. The immoral man has brought shame to Christ and to Paul. The apostle does not need to state this explicitly. The entire argument implicitly assumes the blatant dishonor inherent in the situation. The incredulity expressed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 is not merely related to the shock of open incest but is amplified by the dishonor such a choice heaps upon him and, most importantly, the Lord. The *ecclesia* has engaged in inappropriate refusal to honor Jesus as the symbolic patron of the *ecclesia* and to recognize Paul as the purveyor of the Lord's truth.

2.2 *Paul's Concern Regarding Abrogated Witness*

Paul also considers the ways in which the incestuous man and the endorsement of the *ecclesia* would have been perceived by outsiders. He draws attention to the fact that the incestuous arrangement in the *ecclesia* would not have

emphasizing unity and diversity, all within the common bonds of relationship with Christ. The meal is sourced in the Passover ceremony according to the gospel accounts, and Paul affirms this via appeal to the removal of leaven. It is fallacious to assume that any group member might remain unaffected by the immoral man. Just as leaven has an impact on the entire lump of dough, so does the sin of any member of the *ecclesia*. The effect of the leaven cannot be sectioned off to a particular part of the dough. The entire lump is inextricably bound together as one entity.

52 McNamara, "The Rhetoric of Honor and Shame in 1 Corinthians," 80–118.

53 Calvin J. Roetzel, *Judgement in the Community: A Study of the Relationship Between Eschatology and Ecclesiology in Paul* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 113–15.

been well received by unbelievers, since their own norms did not affirm the marriage of sons to stepmothers. The ways in which honor, shame and shamelessness informed Roman perceptions affect Paul's outlook on the situation. He is deeply concerned that the Corinthians have abrogated all possibility for witness by such egregious abandonment of social norms regarding incest. This concern is well-founded in light of the information available regarding the dishonor brought by incest.

2.2.1 Incest as Extreme Dishonor

Incest brought about severe dishonor in Paul's context.⁵⁴ The awarding and receiving of honor occurred in a challenge-riposte exchange, a pattern which has been identified by modern anthropologists and is recognizable in texts from antiquity. Malina suggests three degrees of challenge-riposte.⁵⁵ First, standard dishonor within social interactions allows for challenge and response to occur within the acceptable bounds of social convention. Standard dishonor is demonstrated, for example, when a person invites another for a meal. The invitee can accept the offer, yet he would also initiate an invitation of his own, lest he is bested by the friend who first invited him.⁵⁶ This is a healthy exchange and no one is any worse off as long as all parties are aware of the rules of engagement.

In contrast to standard dishonor, serious dishonor occurs when a challenge results in significant loss of face, yet with the possibility that the person might be repaid in some way. An example might be found in the scenario of an adulterous wife. She becomes a source of embarrassment, less valuable to the husband, perhaps even viewed as used, yet the relationship might be restored with appropriate compensation on the part of the offending male and a rebuilding of trust. Such interactions are damaging to the person who loses honor in the process, though not irreparable.

Yet a third category might be described as extreme dishonor, which occurs when repair of the damage caused by the challenge is impossible. This scenario might be exemplified in murder, where the person challenged is unable

54 Zeller, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 209.

55 Malina, *The New Testament World*, 44–45; Olga Tellegen-Couperus, *A Short History of Roman Law* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), 17–19.

56 Isoc. 1.26. “ὁμοίως αἰσχρὸν εἶναι νόμιζε τῶν ἐχθρῶν νικᾶσθαι ταῖς κακοποιαῖς καὶ τῶν φίλων ἡττᾶσθαι ταῖς εὐεργεσίαις.” Isocrates, *To Demonicus. To Nicocles. Nicocles or the Cyprians. Panegyricus. To Philip. Archidamus.*, trans. George Norlin, Loeb Classical Library 209 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 19. “Consider it equally disgraceful to be outdone by your enemies in doing injury and to be surpassed by your friends in doing kindness.” See also deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 31.

to responded by virtue of death. The challenge-response interaction is cut short, and this escalates the nature of the loss of honor. The severity of extreme dishonor can be exasperated when occurring in natural groupings such as the family unit. In this case, the challenge brings an extraordinary amount of dishonor, because the damage is both irreparable and unnatural.

It is the latter category of extreme dishonor to which incest was assigned in the Roman mind. The Romans described law in terms of both the human (*ius*) and the divine (*fas*). The *iniuria* were the human prohibitions proscribed in law, whereas violations which caused a disruption in the relationship with the divine were *nefas*. When the *iniuria* came to embody avoidance of the *nefas*, the behavior prohibited was a serious violation of human and divine prerogatives, for the entire community would be affected by transgressions of this sort committed by an individual.⁵⁷ Incestuous relationships were believed to be *nefas* and were also forbidden in the Roman *iniuria*. As explained by Judith E. Grubbs,

Incestuous unions are ‘unholy’ or ‘sacrilegious’: they are *nefas*, against the divine order of things, and in need of religious expiation (*piaculum*). The adjectives *nefariae* and *incestae* recur in later legal references to incestuous marriages, whereas such religiously laden language is not used in describing other nonlegal unions.⁵⁸

Incest was considered both irreparable and unnatural because it brought extreme dishonor in the context of the family itself.⁵⁹

2.2.2 Incest as Shamelessness

Compounding the fact that incest was a form of extreme shame is the perception that incestuous behavior was an expression of shamelessness. This state of matters was brought about when a person had no concern for a healthy sense of shame. Indeed, it would make sense that a person would commit incest only when they lost all connectivity to the social values of their context. Roman literature reflects this correlation between incest and shamelessness. Two of the examples considered in chapter four warrant revisitation in light of this point. In Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Byblis indicates that her voracious desire

⁵⁷ Malina, *The New Testament World*, 45.

⁵⁸ Judith E. Grubbs, “Making the Private Public: Illegitimacy and Incest in Roman Law,” in *Public and Private in Ancient Mediterranean Law and Religion*, ed. Clifford Ando and Jörg Rüpke, *Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten* 65 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 128.

⁵⁹ Apul., *Met.* 10.2. Apuleius articulates this Roman perspective on incest when he describes it as *extremum flagitium* (extreme shame).

is forbidden, yet it remains unquenchable. She proceeds in her pursuit despite its complete inappropriateness:

Denique iam nequeo nil commisisse nefandum.
Et scripsi et petii: temerata est nostra voluntas;
ut nihil adiciam, non possum innoxia dici.
Quod superest, multum est in vota, in crimina parvum.⁶⁰

Byblis exhibits resignation at her plight. Her crimes are unforgivable and insurmountable. She is condemned no matter what, so she throws caution to the wind and proceeds in her folly. A similar sense of shamelessness can be located in Seneca's *Phaedra* within an aside from the main character where she ponders her situation.⁶¹ Her guilt has already been completed: "magna pars sceleris mei / olim peracta est."⁶² Shame itself would be too late now, implying movement into shamelessness: "serus est nobis pudor."⁶³ The Corinthian endorsement of the immoral man would have been perceived by outsiders in this light. For Roman pagans, the only possible explanation for shameless capitulation to incest was a person's inability to gain control over his or her basest desires.

As Paul surveyed the situation from the vantage of a person not in the *ecclesia*, he realized the immense damage which the man and the acceptance of the *ecclesia* was likely to cause. The situation was rife with potential misunderstanding. The *ecclesia* was intended to be a witness to outsiders. Instead, outsiders were asking why they might even wish to affiliate with someone who so callously brought shame of the highest order possible to his own family, both actual and fictive. The Corinthian *ecclesia* should also have been experiencing this extreme dishonor brought about by the immoral man's incestuous choices. They should have mourned the deviant choices of the man and separated themselves from him. This course of action would have been appropriate

60 Ov., *Met* 9.626–630. "There is nothing I can do and not be guilty: / I have written, I have asked for it, I am not / An innocent girl, and nobody will say so. / So what have I to lose? My crimes are full / To overflowing, my desire still hungry." Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. J.D. Reed (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018), 228; Barton, *Roman Honor*, 259.

61 Recall that Seneca's *Phaedra* is quite indicative of the situation Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians. The dating is close and the situation is a stepmother and stepson in an incestuous relationship.

62 Sen., *Phaed.* 594–5. "The greater part of my crime was completed long ago." Seneca, *Tragedies, Volume 1: Hercules. Trojan Women. Phoenician Women. Medea. Phaedra.*, 465–67.

63 Sen., *Phaed.* 595. "Shame is too late for me." Seneca, *Tragedies, Volume 1: Hercules. Trojan Women. Phoenician Women. Medea. Phaedra.*, 467; John G. Fitch, *Annaeana Tragica: Notes on the Text of Seneca's Tragedies*, Mnemosyne, Bibliotheca Classica Batava 256 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 118–19.

no matter whether the ethical underpinning for the response came from a Jewish perspective (Lev. 18:8, 20:11; Deut. 27:20) or a Roman perspective.⁶⁴ Paul is burdened by the devastating ways in which this situation is affecting the *ecclesia* without their even seeming to realize the adverse effects.

2.3 *Potential Motives for the Immoral Man*

This explication of the shame of incest leads to two logical and critical questions: 1) why would the immoral man engage in an incestuous relationship if it brought him such extreme shame? 2) why would the congregation endorse the man instead of confront or castigate him? Many exegetes have opted to move past the social situation in their analysis, reasoning that if Paul did not include the information and if it cannot be discerned with any certainty, then it must not be important to the interpretive process. Others have ventured explanations. We cannot be guaranteed as to the exact situation; however, it is possible to discern a motive at work through an appropriate application of cultural values to the facts which are revealed in Paul's letter. Reconstructions of prior explanation of motive will be considered below, though they ultimately fall short of an adequate explanation. In contrast, it is proposed that the dyadic nature of honor and shame provides a more coherent explanation of the man's choices.

2.3.1 Ignorance

At face value, the most logical explanation of the immoral man's behavior is that he was in some way unaware of the social standards of his day. In this sense, his overlooking such a compellingly negative assessment of incest could at least be explained without resorting to high levels of moral turpitude. As attractive as this solution is at creating a tidy explanation, the proposal is implausible.

If the man were a leader within the secular Corinthian community or a person of high status, his ignorance of such matters would be remarkable indeed. The Romans did indeed provide leniency for those who married incestuously in contexts where such marriages were a custom of the peoples prior to Roman oversight. However, as noted in chapter four, the instances of Roman leniency toward ignorance of incest prohibitions are situated at the geographic edge of the empire and chronologically in the third century AD. Until AD 212/13, Romans had tolerated certain unlawful practices among

64 McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome*, 143. Romans would have understood *relegatio* as a legal option, especially if adultery and incest were undertaken together.

non-citizens, including brother-sister marriages. At that time, however, Emperor Caracalla extended the right of citizenship to all males within the empire. When Egyptians became Roman citizens, there was an attempt to enforce the marriage laws more strictly. This proved to be complicated, and some measure of clemency was granted to those who married in ignorance of Roman law. When these marriages were open rather than hidden, the Romans were particularly understanding. They assumed that if someone knew they were acting unlawfully, they would have hidden rather than openly declared their marriage.⁶⁵

Such a scenario would not have eventuated in first-century Corinth. The urban context of Corinth was hardly in the backwaters of the empire. When the colony had been reestablished under Julius Caesar, it had taken on an especially Roman flavor. Neither was Corinth a place where ignorance of Roman law abounded. According to 1 Corinthians 6:1–11, Corinthian Christ-followers were making use of the Roman legal system to bring lawsuits against one another. It is even possible that the Corinthian believers may have been savvier at legal matters than believers in many other locations in the empire. Neither was Corinth a place where foreign customs related to incest had prevailing influence. The idea that the immoral man acted out of ignorance of Roman law simply does not fit the evidence any more than the idea that a Christ-follower of Jewish background would be so ignorant of the Torah as to think incest was acceptable. Many assume that the man was a Gentile, even though the text does not explicitly state as much. The basis for this assumption relates, in part, to the implausibility of a person of Jewish background being somehow ignorant of Torah regulations, which were abundantly clear on matters of incest. Wanton disregard would have been far more likely than pure ignorance if the man were Jewish.

If the immoral man, whether Gentile or Jew, did not act out of ignorance, then he must have acted out of knowledge. Three motivations have been suggested to explain a knowing violation of social norms where the man weighed the personal benefit of incest against the deficits: romantic attraction, financial greed and legal advantage.

2.3.2 Romantic Attraction

Some have suggested that the man may have found the benefits of titillating romantic involvement more compelling than the subsequent shame which

65 Hopkins, "Brother-Sister Marriage in Roman Egypt," 353–354.

would have resulted.⁶⁶ There is a distinct possibility that a second wife could have been the same age as a son of the first marriage, given the disparity in typical ages for Roman men and women in marriage.⁶⁷ If the male married around thirty and the female at fourteen (an entirely plausible occurrence from the data available), then in a second marriage where the new bride was as young as the initial bride, the stepson would have been of similar age as the stepmother.⁶⁸ The temptation of romantic attraction to a younger stepmother is mentioned, for example, in Appian's *Roman History*, where the king Seleucus remarried a younger woman whom his son by previous marriage fell in love with. Although Antiochus knew that pursuit of his stepmother was wrong, in a strange twist of irony, his father rewards him for his moral restraint by offering his wife and the son's stepmother to Antiochus for marriage.⁶⁹ In the king's speech at the wedding, he recognizes that both bride and groom are young and wishes them well in producing heirs for the kingdom.⁷⁰ If the immoral man of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 did find his stepmother to be romantically appealing, this might perhaps assuage the reader of the impression that he was simply opportunistically searching for the benefit of an older woman's affections.

66 This position is implied (though not explicitly stated) by the phrase “personal pleasure” in Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *1 Corinthians*, Doubleday Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 43.

67 Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 39–43; Richard P. Saller, “Men's Age at Marriage and Its Consequences in the Roman Family,” *Classical Philology* 82, no. 1 (January 1987): 29–30; Keith Hopkins, “The Age of Roman Girls at Marriage,” *Population Studies* 18, no. 3 (1965): 326; Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of 'New' Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 131–132, 161–162.

68 Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*, 48. The potential of romantic attraction is also advocated for by Kenneth E. Bailey, *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011), 167–68; Deming, “The Unity of 1 Corinthians 5–6,” 294; May, *The Body for the Lord*, 65.

69 App., *Syr.* 10.59. “ἦρα μὲν γὰρ ὁ Ἀντίοχος Στρατονίκης τῆς αὐτοῦ Σελεύκου γυναικός, μητρὸς οἱ γενομένης καὶ παῖδα ἤδη τῷ Σελεύκῳ πεποιημένης, συγγιγνώσκων δὲ τὴν ἀθεμιστίαν τοῦ πάθους οὕτε ἐπεχείρει τῷ κακῷ οὔτε προύφερεν.” Appian, *Roman History, Volume III.*, trans. Brian McGing, Loeb Classical Library 4 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019), 123–25. “For Antiochus was in love with his stepmother, Stratonice, Seleucus’ wife, who had already borne Seleucus a son. Recognizing the unlawful nature of his feelings, Antiochus made no attempt to act on his evil impulse, and did not make it public.”

70 App., *Syr.* 10.61. “φιλτατοὶ δ’ εἰσὶ μοι καὶ ἀρχῆς ἄξιοι τῶν τε παίδων ὁ τέλειος ἤδη καὶ ἡ γυνή. ἤδη δ’ αὐτοῖς καὶ παῖδες, ὡς νέοις, γένοιντο ταχέως, καὶ πλείονες φύλακες ὑμῖν τῆς ἡγεμονίας εἶεν.” Appian, *Roman History, Volume III.*, 129. “Those dearest to me, and worthy to rule, are my now adult son and my wife. They are still young, and may they soon have children, to be new guardians of your dominance.”

This explanation, however, anachronistically imposes Western notions of courtship and marriage onto the situation. Roman marriages were often coordinated for many considerations beyond romantic pursuits.⁷¹ While it is true that a bride may have had the right of refusal to her parents in this period of history, she was still not a party to all negotiations. Contemporary Western marriage is a relational commitment between two partners who are mutually attracted to one another, rather than a contractual agreement between two parties who are socially positioned to maximize honor for their collective groups—as was the case in Roman culture among upper classes.⁷²

While reducing the age of the stepmother suggests a romantically sincere relationship born out of undisciplined attraction rather than ulterior motive, the greater concern for a Roman male in marriage likely would have been his loss of status through the dissolution of his father's marriage (either by death or divorce). The opportunity to rectify this loss via marriage would have been immensely attractive to the man, the ways in which it violated social norms notwithstanding. Moreover, if a temptation toward sexual fulfillment existed, it is likely better explained in terms of dominance rather than sensuality. The generally prevailing sexual ethic for Romans was control of the male over the female.⁷³ If the man convinced the woman to be in a relationship with him, despite the fact that there was little financial incentive to her for doing so, he exhibited dominance over her. Thus, her age, if indeed it was comparable to that of the stepson, is less a matter of her youthful desirability to the man as it

71 Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 137.

72 Bruce W. Longenecker, *In Stone and Story: Early Christianity in the Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 205.

73 Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus*, 66–70; Jonathan Walters, "Invading the Roman Body: Manliness and Impenetrability in Roman Thought," in *Roman Sexualities*, ed. Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 26–45. This is not to say that romantic, or even lustful, attraction could not be a partial factor in an incestuous circumstance. Certainly, some of the examples discussed in chapter four exemplify incestuous desires motivated by attraction. Sasia was in love with Melinus. Gellius amorously pursued Lesbia. Byblis desired Caunus. Phaedra confessed her desire for Hippolytus. Romans were not divorced from human longings. Nevertheless, it should be noted that viewing romantic attraction as a singular motivation is overly simplistic. Though the allure of sexual fulfillment within an incestuous relationship was strong, these characters likewise had to consign themselves to a state of shamelessness in order to pursue their vice (cf. Byblis states as much in her reflection on the matter). The negation of romantic love as a primary motivator here is an acknowledgement that incestuous marriage would not have been an inconsequential pursuit. Mere infatuation was likely not sufficient to propel the average individual into such a relationship. We must be careful about superimposing contemporary Western constructs of amorous love over Roman marriage customs, which were heavily laden with social obligation and status awareness.

is an explanation for her inability to resist a man's dominance over her due to inexperience or immature indiscretion.⁷⁴

2.3.3 Greed

It has also been suggested that the immoral man may have been interested in devising a means of retaining wealth.⁷⁵ This is perhaps implied within the text in the sense that Paul immediately follows the prohibition of association with πόρνος with the term πλεονέκτης (covetous, 1 Cor. 5:11). Roman law dictated that upon the death of a husband, the dowry returned to the father of the bride.⁷⁶ If the woman remarried, though, she might seek to retain the dowry.⁷⁷ Alternatively, the stepmother may have been a member of the elite and the father a freedman. The woman's separation from his father would have provided the son a remarkable opportunity to win the fortunes otherwise unavailable to him.⁷⁸ In either version of the scenario, greed for creaturely comforts trumped shame. In an effort to retain the lifestyle he had known previously under his father, he perpetuated the marriage so as to 'keep it all in the family,' in a manner of speaking.

Contemporary Western constructs place a high value on attaining freedom from the need to work through independent wealth acquisition. In the Roman context, the retention of an honorific status via the wealth was equally or more compelling as the comfort wealth may have provided. The dissolution of his father's marriage brought loss of status (and thus shame) and marriage was a means of retaining such honor. As with the idea of romantic involvement, viewing the situation through the reality of an honor-shame dynamic means that the man was more likely to seek honor than wealth if the two could not be obtained simultaneously. Thus, this option also lacks plausibility.

74 Ivarsson, "A Man Has to Do What a Man Has to Do: Protocols of Masculine Sexual Behavior and 1 Corinthians 5–7," 184–86.

75 Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*, 84. Schnabel does not develop the rationale as extensively as Clarke, but suggests the goal of wealth retention "ist plausibel, kann aber nicht bewiesen werden [is plausible, but cannot be proven]." Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 276 (c.f. 294).

76 Allison Glazebrooke and Kelly Olson, "Greek and Roman Marriage," in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities*, ed. Thomas K. Hubbard (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 80.

77 Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Family and Inheritance in the Augustan Marriage Laws," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 27, no. 207 (1981): 65; Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*, 80–81.

78 PHEME PERKINS, *First Corinthians*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 86.

2.3.4 Social Pressure

Another possibility proffered is that the man was not finding an eligible wife, and thus he pursued the marriage to avoid penalties under the Augustan marriage laws. These laws doled out consequences for singleness to men aged twenty-five to sixty so as to encourage marriage and offspring among the Roman population. Singleness became a taxable event for males, so a financial incentive toward marriage certainly existed.⁷⁹ The need to be legally married was so pressing that laws were put in place to regulate marriage arrangements with underage girls. Men could not marry young girls under the age of ten for the purpose of achieving technical clearance and avoiding tax penalties. In this scenario, the immoral man would have been finding a practical legal solution to a social challenge.

As with the preceding explanations of the man's motive, this approach would have been motivated by the quest for honor. The penalties for male singleness involved exclusion from certain festivals and games, which were given in honor of the state. One's loyalty to the emperor might be questioned by lack of attendance. Exclusion from important civic contexts was a means of shaming an individual into conformance. In short, pursuing marriage out of a desire to evade financial penalty would have been driven more by the quest for honor than by the risk of financial loss.

2.3.5 Inadequacies of the Explanations

The ultimate challenge for each of these scenarios is that nothing in the text of 1 Corinthians confirms any of them was definitively the case.⁸⁰ We cannot know for sure that the stepmother was the same age as the man, that she was romantically attractive to him, that she had a dowry of substantial note or that the man had no other marriage prospects. Speculating as to these situations is not inappropriate, but the scenarios are still hypotheses without specific

79 Dio Cass. 54.16.1. "τοῖς τε ἀγάμοις καὶ ταῖς ἀνάνδροις βαρύτερα τὰ ἐπιτίμια ἐπέταξε, καὶ ἔμπαλιν τοῦ τε γάμου καὶ τῆς παιδοποιίας ἅθλα ἔθηκεν" Dio Cassius, *Roman History, Volume VI: Books 51–55*, trans. Earnest Cary, Herbert B. Foster, Loeb Classical Library 83 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), 323. "He laid heavier assessments upon the unmarried men and upon the women without husbands, and on the other hand offered prizes for marriage and the begetting of children." See also Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity*, 203–12; Wallace-Hadrill, "Family and Inheritance in the Augustan Marriage Laws," 60–63.

80 "Vielleicht haben sie die Verbindung toleriert, weil das atl. Gesetz für sie keine Bedeutung mehr hatte. Über andere Gründe, z.B. den Reichtum und Einfluss des Unzüchtigen, kann man nur spekulieren." [Perhaps they tolerated the connection because the Old Testament law no longer had any significance for them. About other reasons (e.g., the wealth and influence of the fornicator), one can only speculate.] Zeller, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 200.

evidence.⁸¹ Moreover, considering the effect of honor and shame on these scenarios, the proposed motives are probably anachronistic interpretations of a choice which likely would have been motivated by a different reality altogether.

It is far more probable that the immoral man was driven by an attempt to maximize honor than ignorance, romantic attraction, greediness or a clever legal workaround. Even though a handful of commentators have conjectured as to the circumstances of the immoral man, most commentators have simply opted to note the lack of information and proceed with the exegesis from that standpoint.⁸² However, this approach truncates the interpretation by eliminating all social data from the process. While circumstantial data is lacking, social data is not. It seems more productive to work from what can be known. What is known from social scientific data and the biblical text itself is that honor and shame served as a framework by which relationships were formed and decisions evaluated. We can assert with confidence that whatever the man's particular circumstances were, if he acted in accordance with the social norms of his cultural context, he would have sought to maximize his honor. Unless he was shameless and had simply given up on the idea of being honorable, the benefit gained from romantic dalliance, wealth acquisition or legal workarounds could not outweigh the shame brought about by the *nefas* of incest.⁸³

81 I would apply Clarke's methodology, though with a different set of data related to the collectivistic nature of Mediterranean society. Note the conclusion which Clarke provides regarding patronage: "It should be noted that there is little evidence to provide grounds for any certain reconstruction of the situation in 1 Corinthians 5. It has been shown, however, that both the social and legal background to first-century society in Corinth does shed further light on the Pauline material. By assessing this background it has been possible to suggest a reconstruction which remains consistent with both the socio-historical information and the text of 1 Corinthians 5. Taken by itself, this reconstruction remains only a possibility. Taken, however, alongside the thrust of Paul's argument throughout 1 Corinthians 1–6 this reconstruction becomes a probability." Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*, 88.

82 See the general admonition regarding the ambiguities of the historical situation in Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 213; Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 197. "We must admit that there is little evidence in 1 Corinthians to use in the task of reconstruction. Some knowledge of the social and legal background to first-century society in Corinth may help." Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 158. "As is often the case in this letter, we are hard-pressed to delineate the actual circumstances that provoked this sharp denunciation. ... Since Paul gives no details, we must leave open the question about the exact relationship between the man and the woman and why it came about, but the suggestion that this man possessed some social standing best explains the church's incriminating silence." Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 82.

83 Collins, "The Function of 'Excommunication' in Paul," 252–53. Paul's approach to the situation ought to be considered as well. If the situation was a matter of personal weakness or momentary passion, Paul may have been more inclined to address the situation in a

The notion that the man weighed his options pragmatically in order to find the greatest pleasure for himself refuses to account for the effect of honor and shame on an individual in the Roman context, not to mention the ways in which collectivistic connectivity to a group would have deeply impacted the man's choices.

2.4 *Potential Motives for the Ecclesia*

Prior to proposing a different explanation for the man's motive, it is also valuable to consider the separate but related question of what could have motivated the members of the *ecclesia* to rally behind the man in his incestuous relationship. Why would they not confront him, or at the very least, artfully look the other way without issuing an explicit endorsement, so as to avoid the awkwardness of confrontation? On this matter too, the history of scholarship provides some proffered explanations. The congregation might have been ignorant of Jewish moral standards, spiritually weak, or obstructed by the social status of the man.

2.4.1 Ignorance

Some suggest that the Corinthians may have been unable to articulate why the immoral man's behavior was unacceptable because, being new to the faith, they were ignorant of such moral standards from a Jewish perspective. Ostensibly, they were influenced by a pagan background which was replete with open acceptance of immorality, and as a result followed right along in the deception. This view falls short in a few ways. The general social standard regarding incest was well known, even to Roman pagans, as documented in the preceding chapter. For the same reason it is unlikely that the immoral man himself engaged in incest as a result of ignorance, it is unlikely that the Corinthian Christ-followers were unaware of such a social standard. The Roman incest taboo was not entirely separated from the Roman religious perspective, in that incest was considered *nefas*—an act which put the divine and the human in disarray. Pagan religious practices would thus have likely exposed the Corinthians to the incest taboo in the normal course of life.

The notion that incest might have been accepted simply because of a particularly loose morality in Corinth also does not accord with the evidence. The

graduated manner (cf. Matt. 18:15–17). In contrast, Paul feels the need to address the matter immediately, to the point that he even mediates his presence with the Corinthians (1 Cor. 5:3) via the letter to deal with the matter at the soonest possible opportunity. Such a response on the part of the apostle suggests that the matter was more serious than a matter of personal discipleship of an immature Christ-follower. The mistakes being perpetuated could not be left unaddressed.

Roman rationale for incest prohibition was not rooted in the fact that incest was especially deviant. Rather, the rationale related to the protection of honor within close kin relationships. Thus, the logic that toleration of especially deviant sexual sin in Corinth also assuaged residents of the incest taboo does not follow. The potential escalation of sexual deviance in other ways did not diminish the honor-shame framework or the reliance on close kin relational networks. There is no evidence that the prevalence of immorality in Corinth supplied any unique justification for incest, despite its widespread condemnation around the empire.

Paul seems to assume that ignorance on the part of the *ecclesia* was not the case, at least in the matter of the marriage of a son to his stepmother.⁸⁴ He describes the *ecclesia* as πεφυσιωμένοι (arrogant, 1 Cor. 5:2). They are putting forth καύχημα (boasting, 1 Cor. 5:6). Instead of offering further explanation regarding moral standards, as he does in the matter of prostitutes and marriage subsequently in the letter,⁸⁵ Paul says that such behavior is not accepted ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (among the Gentiles, 1 Cor. 5:1). Paul urges application of an unheeded standard rather than explaining what the moral standard ought to be. His correction and further clarification relate to how his previous letter was misunderstood, not to the moral corruption of incest.

In many ways, this passage is more about the choices of the *ecclesia* than the choices of the man. Paul's lack of explanatory rhetoric regarding the immoral man is noticeable and argues against ignorance on the part of the *ecclesia*.⁸⁶ The Corinthian Christ-followers were complicit with the man and may have justified his behavior on the very same grounds that he did. Whatever the case, it is not probable that they simply did not know that his behavior was wrong as a result of their recent conversion, since their pre-conversion experiences would have inculcated this value equally as well.

2.4.2 Spiritual Weakness

Another suggestion is that the Corinthians understood the man's behavior as inappropriate, but endorsed it nonetheless as a result of their immaturity in the faith. Paul frequently referenced persons in Corinth who were too weak to

84 May, *The Body for the Lord*, 66.

85 In relation to immorality with prostitutes, Paul asks multiple times οὐκ οἴδατε (1 Cor. 6:15, 16, 19). In answer to his own question, Paul offers explanation in each instance to bring clarification. In these cases, he does not assume an unactualized moral standard but rather one that is not understood. Additionally, in addressing the matter of marriage (1 Cor. 7:1–40), Paul is long on explanation and short on assumption of understanding. But this is simply not the case in regard to the immoral man.

86 Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 82.

fully apprehend truths needing translation from theory to praxis. They may not have known how to go about confronting the man.

Two factors argue against such a conclusion. First, Paul shows immense deference to the weak throughout the letter. Were this situation in need of deference, he likely would have given instructions for remediation without such a stern rebuke. In regard to meat sacrificed to idols, Paul carefully and gently explains how all members of the *ecclesia* are to be brought along in the natural process of growth. Paul's response is notable in that the issue of idolatry was not inconsequential for the faith. In contrast, Paul approaches the Corinthian believers on the matter of incest as if they ought to have known better. Second, Paul deals with the Corinthian pride, accusing them of boasting in the sin. He perceives their choice to be complicit enablement, which requires knowledge and tenacity. The moral standard that their endorsement perpetuates is in direct opposition to all social norms as well as Jewish ethical standards. If immaturity were the cause of their endorsement, it is more likely that such immaturity would have pressed them toward condemnation of the immoral man, as this would have been the path with less social consequence. Instead, they have chosen the harder path of resistance, misunderstanding and shame. Such a calculated decision is born out of strength rather than weakness.

2.4.3 Social Status

Alternately, the Corinthians may have been incapable of confronting the man due to his social status more so than their own spiritual weaknesses. Honor challenges are typically made only between equals. If the immoral man was of high social standing, it would have been quite unlikely that lower-status members of the *ecclesia* would have even considered confronting the man in his sin. In the history of interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13, an early assumption existed that the man was a respected teacher in the *ecclesia*. Chrysostom proposed that Paul rebuked the Corinthians because they were deceived by the teaching of the immoral man. He argued that they should have reported the situation to Paul, the man's importance within the *ecclesia* notwithstanding.⁸⁷ Theodoret of Cyrus argued that Paul was exhorting the Corinthians to mourn the immoral man's sin; however, he clarifies that congregants should not judge their teachers, even if they regret their teacher's sin. His assumption

87 Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (New York: Cosimo, 2007), 83–84; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 389.

likewise demonstrates early acceptance of the immoral man as a leader within the *ecclesia*.⁸⁸

More recently, social scientific reconstructions by John K. Chow and Andrew D. Clarke have argued that the man was a wealthy patron of the *ecclesia*, a person of high social standing. This placed his honor rating at notable levels due to ascribed honor from the man's heritage and achieved honor from his potential patronage of the *ecclesia* (or key individuals within the *ecclesia*). Both Chow and Clarke follow a descriptive social scientific approach in their analysis, observing patterns in regard to Roman patronage and litigation as applied within the Corinthian context.⁸⁹

This scenario of social inequality seems more likely than the explanations of either ignorance or spiritual weakness, yet there are several reasons why this is not the most effective rationale for the endorsement of the *ecclesia*. Paul offers no latitude to the Corinthians for their affirmation of incest. He gives no acknowledgement of the social complications which may have left them unwittingly demurring, as if caught between the cultural expectations toward a high-status patron and the condemnation of incest.⁹⁰ If the latter were the case, it seems more likely that Paul would have confronted the immaturity of the Corinthian Christ-followers. Instead, Paul confronts the arrogant boasting of the *ecclesia*. This gives good indication that the Corinthians made their choice regarding the immoral man with full knowledge. If Paul felt that the believers in Corinth were trapped by social convention, he certainly gives no indication that he was asking them to work against the tide. Rather, he treats them as if they have been entirely illogical in the way they are behaving. Rhetorically, Paul actually castigates the congregation more forthrightly

88 Theodoret, *Theodoret of Cyrus: Commentary on the Letters of St. Paul*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001), 176–78.

89 “I have shown that the man could have been a wealthy man. But it is difficult to tell if the man was in fact an important person. However it looks probable that the church had some important persons in its midst. We have seen previously how the Roman law served the interests of the powerful and could be manipulated by the powerful for their own ends. If the immoral man was a man of influence and power, it is doubtful that any one [sic] would dare to challenge his action. This, I submit, would help partly to explain how the man could associate with the stepmother without being prosecuted. So the immoral man may have been a rich and powerful man.” Chow, *Patronage and Power*, 140. Clarke corroborates Chow's conclusions regarding the man's wealth and prominence as rationale for why the immoral man was not prosecuted or rebuked.

90 Contra Clarke, who argues that the Corinthian *ecclesia* turned a blind eye to behavior they knew was inappropriate, yet they were unable to overcome cultural barriers (such as a client-patron relationship) or the social awkwardness of facing off with someone of power or prestige: “It is, therefore, the case that the church is not condoning incest, but rather that it may be ignoring it.” Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth*, 87.

than the immoral man. The consequence will be more substantial for the man, but Paul never addresses him directly. He speaks to the congregation about what he will do regarding the man. The way Paul responds to the congregation demonstrates that they acted in willful disregard for what they knew to be right rather than capitulating to social convention even though they knew the convention to be wrong.

2.5 *Explanation for Anomalous Incest*

The inadequacies of prior explanations for the behavior of the man and the endorsement of the congregation leave the exegete in need of a fuller explanation of motive. It is often left unconsidered that the *ecclesia* and the immoral man might have possessed a fully developed moral justification for their endorsement of incest. Such an idea is often dismissed in light of the perception of a universal incest taboo. Simply put, it is difficult to embrace the idea of anyone justifying incest as a part of a well-conceived ethical system.

Even though some form of an incest taboo existed or exists in most cultures, perspectives on incest are far from universal.⁹¹ As was pointed out in chapter four, there are notable exceptions to the taboo historically. We have ample evidence of the Roman condemnation of Persian and Egyptian tolerance of incest. Even where the taboo existed, it was applied in varying degrees of familial relationship. A truly universal phenomenon would offer a standardized measurement for which degree of relationship constitutes incest. The prevalence of some sense of incest avoidance in most cultures is in no way the same as a universalized incest taboo ensconced in natural law. The adoption of this generalization leaves the impression that prohibition of incest was so prevalent that exceptions are merely very minor deviations from an overwhelmingly shared perspective. The historical and anthropological evidence does not support such a conclusion. Add to this the general horror of the average modern at the prospect of incest, along with lack of firsthand exposure to any form of close kin marriage, and the result is complete disbelief that endorsement of incest is conscionable for a rationale person. Such an approach, however, is nothing more than a dismissal of the argument based on the assumption that it is unlikely to be so.⁹² It should not be dismissed out of hand that the Corinthian Christ-followers believed they were doing what was correct.

91 Keener, "Adultery, Divorce," 13.

92 Eckhard J. Schnabel provides one example of this: "es ist höchst unwahrscheinlich, dass die Gemeinde, oder jedenfalls die Mehrheit der korinthischen Christen, ein Verhalten, das nach römischem Recht als kriminell galt, bewusst gelobt hätte." [It is highly unlikely that the church, or at least the majority of Corinthian Christians, would have consciously

Commonly, the idea of incest endorsement is connected to a libertinism which permissively allowed embodied sexual practices in view of the temporal nature of the human body.⁹³ In this understanding, the Corinthians had convinced themselves of their liberty in Christ, and their newfound beliefs unmoored them from the ethical constraints of previous religious adherences. Their freedom to engage inconsequentially in an incestuous relationship or casual dalliance with prostitutes had become a hallmark of their freedom, justified by their theological outlook.⁹⁴ Characterizations of this libertinism leave the impression that the Corinthians found deviant pleasure in exploiting an ethical loophole by virtue of their misunderstanding of Christian freedom. As such, they engaged in activities otherwise forbidden by social standards or religious convictions because they willingly blinded themselves to truth as a result of their strong attraction to sin. It is suggested here that the situation in Corinth was far more nuanced. It is plausible to argue that incest endorsement was present in the Corinthian *ecclesia*, yet that the rationale which informed their permissiveness was more than a mere indulgence of sensual desire somehow justified by a clever theological perspective. Since incestuous practice would result in overwhelming social shame, the incentive to engage in such behavior would need to sustain the adherents through ostracism, misunderstanding and exclusion. The rationale at work in Corinth needed to be cohesive enough to convince the vast majority (or perhaps the entirety) of the *ecclesia* to withstand negative consequences.

Gerald Harris provides a sociological analysis of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 in light of H.T. Himmelweit's deviance theory (which relates closely to but precedes subjective group dynamics within the social identity approach). He concludes

commended behavior that was considered criminal under Roman law.] Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 277.

- 93 Versions of this idea have been developed in terms of proto-Gnostic libertinism, spiritual elitism and realized eschatology. This study does not endorse these particular explanations, but it shares the perspective that the Corinthians leaned into the incest with a sense of justification rather than ignorance or mere obligation. Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 83; Murphy-O'Connor, *1 Corinthians*, 40; C.K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Black's New Testament Commentary (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 120–22; O.L. Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles: Marriage Rules in the Letters of Paul* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1985), 119–22; M.D. Goulder, "Libertines? (1 Cor 5–6)," *Novum Testamentum* 41, no. 4 (1999): 334–48; Anthony C. Thiselton, "Realized Eschatology at Corinth," *New Testament Studies* 24, no. 4 (1978): 510–26.
- 94 Goulder, "Libertines? (1 Cor 5–6)," 334–38. The matter of libertinism in Corinth has a long and diverse history of scholarship. Goulder itemizes the views in sum and then argues that simultaneous libertinism and asceticism is unlikely.

that the Corinthian *ecclesia* has abandoned the traditional Jewish and Roman stances on incest:

[Paul's] stance represents a traditional Jewish and pagan norm which governs sexual relations among family members and forbids a liaison between stepmother and stepson. ... The tension between Paul and the congregation is significant for understanding the norms. Either the church is simply lax in enforcing the common norm, or it does not share the incest norm with Paul. Paul's strictures against arrogance and boasting within the congregation suggest the latter.⁹⁵

Harris postulates two possibilities for why the Corinthian congregation would have set aside both Jewish and pagan norms regarding incest. Either the Corinthians were confused by Paul's ambivalent view on the Jewish law, thus giving them license to set aside Jewish strictures related to incest. Alternatively, he proposes that libertinism could be a stage of development in a millenarian movement where the transition from no rules to new rules marked openness to varying conduct.⁹⁶

Harris is quite perceptive in stressing the need to answer the pressing question of why the Corinthians set aside such widely accepted norms; however, his explanations do not delineate an ethical or cultural basis upon which the Corinthians might take such an anomalous path. A more effective answer lies in understanding how the Corinthian Christ-followers could justify this alternate ethic within the existing framework of their dyadic honor-shame culture. Rather than moving toward shameless disregard for moral standards, the Corinthians were actually applying the honor-shame protocols in a manner they perceived to align with the apostle Paul's teachings.

Murphy-O'Connor opens the possibility for this interpretation by suggesting that the Corinthians sought to differentiate themselves as ethically distinct from Gentiles:

At the minimum the incestuous man must have claimed that his behaviour was in keeping with Paul's teaching, and a plausible connection is easily found. There can be little doubt that Paul insisted that the comportment of believers should be different from that of the ambient environment; "they must shine as lights in the world" (Phil 2:15). Such tangible evidence of the power of God was the existential reinforcement

95 Harris, "The Beginnings of Church Discipline," 11.

96 Harris, "The Beginnings of Church Discipline," 13–14.

of the preached word (1 Thess 1:8). Since incest was not practised either by Jews or by Gentiles, the Corinthians argued that a case of incest in the community unambiguously differentiated them from their neighbours. In a word they were doing exactly what Paul wanted, and could take pride in measuring up to his standards!⁹⁷

Here Murphy-O'Connor suggests that the Corinthian believers associated their incest with being distinct from unbelievers.⁹⁸ While the notion appears

97 Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 17–18.

98 While I am suggesting in concurrence with Murphy-O'Connor that the Corinthians revised aspects of their Roman social identity, this argument should not be construed as a suggestion that the Corinthians abandoned this identity. Even while confronting many choices on the part of the Corinthians, Paul definitively believed that many aspects of the Roman social identity should be retained (cf. 1 Cor. 7:20). The new in-Christ identity in no way eliminated the relevance of their continuing Roman civic identity. Nevertheless, social identity is not a black and white affair where one aspect of a person's identity determines whether he or she belongs within a group wholesale. As social identity theory research developed, scholars recognized the need for a more nuanced theory which negotiated situations in which multiple social identities were salient for an individual. Social identity complexity theory by Sonia Roccas and Marilynn B. Brewer proposed four ways in which multiple (sometimes competing) identities are negotiated: intersection, dominance, compartmentalization, and merger. Intersection recognizes the overlapping aspects of two or more social identities. This area of overlap is identified by the individual. Commonalities are distinguished from aspects of the identities which are not shared. The narrower area where the multiple identities intersect in comity is considered the unique social identity by which the person identifies. The second strategy (dominance) emphasizes one identification over and above others by subordinating other social identities to the prominent identity. In this case, the subordinated social identities become descriptors of the individual rather than definitional. The third approach (compartmentalization) explains how different social identities gain prominence within varying contexts, such that the person's identity might be conditioned by the situation. The last category (merger) describes a situation where "non-convergent group memberships are simultaneously recognized and embraced in their most inclusive form ... Ingroup identification is extended to others who share any of one's important social category memberships-social identity is the sum of one's combined group identifications." Roccas and Brewer, "Social Identity Complexity," 91. It might not be possible to identify which of these processes was at work in Corinth with the data on hand. However, it can be observed that social identity is a complex reality where multiple identities are continually being negotiated. The fact that the Corinthians set aside an aspect of their Roman civic identity in the case of incest norms should not be read as an indication that the Corinthian Christ-followers did not consider themselves to be Roman. This would simply be a case where the in-Christ identity becomes more influential in the process of identity negotiation. They retained their Romanness while also opposing behavior which might be stereotypically Roman. This reasoning affirms a particularist approach to identity, where existing social

counterintuitive at first consideration, it actually follows a pattern which is evidenced throughout the New Testament regarding the adjudication of honor for believers.

David A. deSilva lays out a compelling social scientific model in regard to the use of honor and shame by minority groups.⁹⁹ The key components of his observations are as follows. Honor is accorded to individuals in conjunction with social norms within the cultural context. In social contexts where multiple value systems persist, it is not possible to draw clear lines in regard to the awarding of honor. When minority groups within the social context were evaluated according to the norms of the majority, they would consistently lack honor. Such groups, therefore, undertake two psychological processes to maintain the validity of their identity in the face of dismissal.

First, minority groups redefine the court of public opinion by disallowing the majority to determine the norms by which honor is accorded. The role of according honor is instead given to insiders who operate according to the values and norms of the minority group. In the case of a religious group, the deity serves as the ultimate court of public opinion. The value of the majority group's perspective is downgraded so as to justify the revisions in the court of public opinion. In many cases, the majority culture is castigated and condemned. Examples of this in the New Testament exist when a biblical author highlights the idolatrous habits of an unbeliever.¹⁰⁰

Second, the minority group considers the devaluation by the majority culture as a positive reality. The agonistic struggle against persecution, for instance, is described in terms of a noble fight. Being a recipient of misunderstanding and shame becomes a source of honor in and of itself, a sentiment which is frequently articulated through athletic or military metaphors. The suffering of the minority is recast as an experience which helpfully changes the individuals who are shamed, such that the ultimate outcome is valuable even though the intent of the shaming is negative.¹⁰¹

The most forthright example of these two processes at work in the New Testament is when the shameful execution of Christ on the cross became that

identity remains salient for the individual even as that person wrestles with the competing realities of nested identities. Cf. discussion on similar situation for both Philemon and Onesimus in J.B. Tucker, "Paul's Particular Problem—The Continuation of Existing Identities in Philemon," in Tucker and Baker, *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, 409–24.

99 deSilva, *The Hope of Glory*, 26–28.

100 deSilva, *The Hope of Glory*, 4–7.

101 deSilva, *The Hope of Glory*, 7–8.

in which believers boasted (Gal. 6:14).¹⁰² Following a Savior who was crucified would be a source of shame rather than honor for a Roman; however, believers revised the court of reputation to see this shame as a source of honor.

These two principles in deSilva's model can be applied to illuminate the Corinthian situation. This revisionary process in regard to honor leads to an ironic reversal whereby that which was intended to cause shame actually becomes a source of honor. This value reversal is evident in the Pauline perspective on his life and ministry. An example of his approach is found in 1 Corinthians 9:25 where Paul contrasts the worldly perspective with that of the *ecclesia*: πᾶς δὲ ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος πάντα ἐγκρατεύεται, ἐκεῖνοι μὲν οὖν ἵνα φθαρτὸν στέφανον λάβωσιν, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄφθαρτον (Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable., 1 Cor. 9:25). Paul suggests that victory for a Christ-follower is determined by a different set of values than for the unbeliever. The crown is a symbol of victory and success. Receipt of a victor's crown means that the judge of the competition deemed the winner to have competed according to the rules and to have exceeded the efforts of others. The imperishable crown by which the Christ-follower is awarded honor indicates entirely different standards and even a new judge for the competition.

It is not merely the norms of the outgroup which are rejected, but also the role of the majority in determining what is honorable. In the case of Christ-followers, God's opinion is elevated over that of unbelievers. Again, we see evidence of this thinking in Paul when he tells the Corinthians that any evaluation of him by a human group is not relevant. What matters is the Lord's appraisal: ὁ δὲ ἀνακρίνων με κύριός ἐστιν ... ὃς καὶ φωτίζει τὰ κρυπτὰ τοῦ σκοτὸς καὶ φανερώσει τὰς βουλὰς τῶν καρδιῶν (but the one who examines me is the Lord who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts., 1 Cor. 4:4–5). Paul communicates to the Corinthians that believers are evaluated by a different judge according to different standards, which are in accord with truth.

These shifts in the norms themselves, along with the party which adjudicates them, are reinforced by the social processes of vilification and emulation. Vilification of the outgroup becomes an important strategy for undermining the demand of the majority culture to evaluate behavior according to the social norms of the majority. It justifies the shift away from allowing the outgroup to serve as the court of public opinion. The only court which will render accurate judgment is that of the Lord. The lens of a social identity approach points out

¹⁰² Paul uses *καυχάομαι* here, the same term found in 1 Corinthians 4:7, 5:6. Words in the *καυχ*-grouping are standard in the vocabulary of honor and shame.

how vilification reveals clearly defined group boundaries. In an honor-shame framework, this vilification has the added benefit of justifying disregard for the opinion of the majority. Shaming from the majority culture can be ignored by Christ-followers since the majority themselves exhibit shamelessness in their denial of God's values. Indeed, Paul engages in such a polemic. He notes that true wisdom is not the wisdom of this age, nor understood by the rulers of this age (1 Cor. 2:6–8). If they had apprehended true wisdom, they would not have crucified the Lord. That which is of the Spirit is foolishness to the unbeliever (1 Cor. 2:14). The wisdom of the world is foolishness to God (1 Cor. 3:19). Paul's point is that foolish, ignorant people do not have the right or ability to decide whether believers are honorable.

Likewise, group members are affirmed or cautioned in norms by way of exemplars. Positive exemplars are prototypical figures who embody the ingroup norms and serve as the ideal for all group members. Negative exemplars are black sheep who dwell at the edge of norm conformance and potentially blur the lines of the ingroup distinctiveness by their deviation from group norms. The minority group reinforces minority values by elevating certain figures as laudable and worthy of emulation. In the case of 1 Corinthians, Paul places himself in this role (1 Cor. 4:15–17). Likewise, other figures are chastised and group members are cautioned against the models of these black sheep. The immoral man falls into this category, such that the Corinthians should not even associate with him (1 Cor. 5:9).

As Peter Marshall notes, according to the cultural rubric of his day Paul catalogs "all the wrong things, his shortcomings, failures and faults."¹⁰³ In 1 Corinthians 4:9–13, the apostle is condemned to death, a spectacle to the world, a fool, weak and without honor. He is hungry, poorly clothed and homeless. He is roughly treated, reviled, slandered and persecuted. He considers himself to be refuse and dregs. Whereas these aspects of his experience would be considered shameful by unbelievers, he is not limited by them; rather, they free him.

This ironic reversal is also evidenced elsewhere in the Corinthian correspondence. Paul describes the persecution of unbelievers as light affliction which is far outweighed by eternal glory (2 Cor. 4:17–18). Paul identifies with the shame Jesus bore on the cross, knowing that just as Jesus was honored through resurrection so will his followers be also (2 Cor. 4:8–14). Paul offers a list of contradictions which highlight the honor in suffering for Christ. They are afflicted but not crushed, perplexed but not despairing, persecuted though

103 Peter Marshall, "A Metaphor of Social Shame: θριαμβεύειν in 2 Cor. 2:14," *Novum Testamentum* 25, no. 4 (1983): 315.

not forsaken and struck down but not destroyed. Paul is concerned about the perception of others: Μηδεμίαν ἐν μηδενὶ διδόντες προσκοπήν, ἵνα μὴ μωμηθῇ ἡ διακονία, (giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited, 2 Cor. 6:3). Nonetheless, he ultimately seeks to demonstrate his authenticity as an apostle by being a faithful servant of God, regardless of how this is perceived: ἐν παντὶ συνιστάμενοι ἑαυτοὺς ὡς θεοῦ διάκονοι (in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, 2 Cor. 6:4). Human opinion might accord either glory or dishonor (2 Cor. 6:8), but ultimately the evaluation of behavior is in accordance with divine standards rather than human. This is evidenced by Paul's emphasis on righteousness over lawlessness (2 Cor. 6:14a), light over darkness (2 Cor. 6:14b), Christ over Belial (2 Cor. 6:15a), believer over unbeliever (2 Cor. 5:15b) and the temple of the living God over idols (2 Cor. 6:16).

Even further underscoring this point, Paul itemizes his travails in service of Christ, which include dangers and painful treatment. He assumes an agonistic posture where his difficulties are far more than those of his opponents. In the end, Paul says Εἰ καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ, τὰ τῆς ἀσθενείας μου καυχῆσομαι (If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness, 2 Cor. 11:30). Paul makes it clear that his conduct among unbelievers and toward other Christ-followers is his source of honor (2 Cor. 1:12). He has put aside shameful behavior, unlike others who adulterate the word of God (2 Cor. 4:2). He upholds himself as an example of honor in how he handles the collection for the saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:21). Paul believes that his honorable behavior will undergird his testimony in the eyes of unbelievers.

This theme finds the most expansive treatment in 2 Corinthians 12:9 where Paul explicitly states that he finds honor in weakness.¹⁰⁴ His thorn in the flesh, which should bring him shame, actually brings him honor. DeSilva describes

104 This dynamic is observable in many places outside of the Corinthian correspondence as well. "Once the distinctively Christian criteria for what constitutes honorable and dishonorable behavior have been established, and group members' focus has been taken wholly off the verdict of the unbelieving world and fixed on God's approval and the intimations of that approval reflected in one's fellow Christians and in the leaders of the group, then honor and shame can be used within the group to reinforce commitment to live out the group's values. Leaders can harness the hearers' natural desire for honor to promote the course of action or attitudes necessary for sustaining the Christian movement as the path to honor before the court of reputation that matters and to dissuade them from any attitudes, behaviors and commitments that might prove detrimental to group solidarity or contrary to group values, labeling it as the path to dishonor before that body of significant others." deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity*, 78. See also a proposal that this same logic is at work in Paul's letter to the Philippians: Ben Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 87–88.

this paradoxical exchange of shame for honor in the Corinthian context, offering the following apt summary:

Paul negates the value of the opinion of non-Christians in the strongest of terms, setting up an alternative court of reputation consisting of God, Christ, the supra-local church, and the local Christian community. He reaffirms his reliability and the reliability of his team members so that their ascriptions of honor and their censure will carry the necessary weight to guide the community. He seeks to activate this court of reputation by directing the believers to honor one another according to the standards of honor set by the gospel, and to use shaming where necessary to keep the wayward sisters and brothers true to the norms of the group.¹⁰⁵

Applying this model of glorying in shame to the situation of the immoral man explains the anomalous choices of the Corinthian Christ-followers in a way that is neither circumstantially speculative nor averse to the social norms of the day. In this reconstruction of motive, the Corinthian Christ-followers imbibed certain aspects of Paul's teaching related to honor and shame, affirming the following: 1) the *ecclesia* should not seek honor in accordance with the standards or norms of unbelievers, 2) unbelievers are likely to misunderstand the ethos of the *ecclesia* 3) the shame which unbelievers would bring upon Christ-followers as a result of this misunderstanding should not be heeded as valid and 4) in fact, the negative perceptions of outsiders should be viewed as a badge of honor.¹⁰⁶

In Corinth, the *ecclesia* (operating as a minority group) replaced the social norms of Roman society with alternate values so as to determine whether honor should be granted. Such a reversal necessitated a rejection of the social norms by which the Roman majority adjudicated honor claims. The Corinthian Christ-followers appear to have misapplied these principles related to honor and shame. By endorsing incest, the *ecclesia* rejected gentile norms and established an ethos that resulted in derision and misunderstanding on the part of outsiders. Rather than seek to correct these misunderstandings by revision of ethic or ethos, the Corinthian Christ-followers reveled in the misunderstanding as a source of honor. Paul refers to their honor claim with the term *καύχημα* (boasting, 1 Cor. 5:6), which he says is not good. This is not to say that Paul feels that all honor claims are inappropriate, as might be incorrectly surmised from the common English translation of *καύχημα* as boasting. As noted by Esler in

105 deSilva, *The Hope of Glory*, 139–40.

106 deSilva, *The Hope of Glory*, 91–143.

relation to Paul's usage of the *καύχ*- word group in the Corinthian correspondence, the term

transports us straight into the honour culture of the first-century of the Mediterranean world. An 'act of claiming honour' or a 'claim-to-honour' better catches Paul's meaning. Those who valued their reputation acted within social conventions by drawing attention to circumstances that portrayed it in a good light. ... It is not problematic to make a claim of this sort, as long as it had a solid foundation; otherwise one made oneself a fool and thus became shamed.¹⁰⁷

Paul speaks of himself as making a *καύχημα* (1 Cor. 9:15), but he does not treat it as inherently negative. He merely says that it must be a claim to honor which can be sustained, such that it is not found to be empty or unprovable. This positive rendering of *καύχημα* is reinforced by the athletic metaphor which follows in the passage. There Paul says that he competes (running and boxing, which Paul equates to preaching) so as to avoid disqualification (1 Cor. 9:24–27). Removal from the sporting event would be worse than losing, in terms of the shame which one would experience. Honor claims can be positive and constructive, yet the Corinthians have made a claim which is based on arrogance. This fact is made clear by the use of the participle *πεφυσιωμένοι* (arrogant, 1 Cor. 5:2) to describe the Corinthians. The arrogance and the honor claim are one and the same for Paul. Previously in the letter, the apostle describes the Corinthians with the verb *φυσιοῦσθε* (you will become arrogant, 1 Cor. 4:6) and closely associates this with the question *τί καυχᾶσαι* (why do you boast, 1 Cor. 4:7). Implied in 1 Corinthians 4:6–7 is the fact that the honor claim made by the Corinthians is unfounded. This tendency carries over into the situation with the immoral man.

Further evidence of this idea that the Corinthians endorsed incest as a badge of honor exists in understanding which term is modified by the prepositional phrase *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ* (in the name of our Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. 5:4). Commentators and English versions of the New Testament disagree as to the modification. Four explanations have been posited, the first three being the most common.¹⁰⁸ In point of fact, it seems that the fourth option

107 Philip F. Esler, *2 Corinthians: A Social Identity Commentary*, T&T Clark Social Identity Commentaries on the New Testament (London: T&T Clark, 2021), 61–62.

108 Thiselton and Conzelmann list six options, though they are accounting for both phrases *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ* and *σὺν τῇ δυνάμει*. Interestingly, the option that the immoral man committed his incest in the name of the Lord is not even considered within the options expressed. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 393–94; Conzelmann, MacRae, and Leitch, *1 Corinthians*, 97.

is the most likely grammatically, though it has been commonly discounted in light of the theological complications. Each view of the modification will be identified and explained in increasing order of grammatical probability, followed by a rationale as to why the fourth explanation is optimal despite its being largely ignored. Here is the Greek text of 1 Corinthians 5:3–5 for sake of reference:

Ἐγὼ μὲν γάρ, ἀπὼν τῷ σώματι παρὼν δὲ τῷ πνεύματι, ἤδη κέκρικα ὡς παρὼν τὸν οὕτως τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, συναχθέντων ὑμῶν καὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ πνεύματος σὺν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, παραδοῦναι τὸν τοιοῦτον τῷ Σατανᾷ εἰς ὄλεθρον τῆς σαρκός, ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου.

The first exegetical option is to say that the man was to be put out of the *ecclesia* in the name of the Lord Jesus. In this case, the prepositional phrase would modify the infinitive παραδοῦναι: ... ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, ... παραδοῦναι. ... This option is on display in the NASB: “In the name of our Lord Jesus ... I have decided to turn such a person over to Satan ...” (1 Cor. 5:4a, 5a, NASB). Morris and Lang both support this view in their commentary analysis.¹⁰⁹

A second option is to say that the *ecclesia* gathers in the name of the Lord Jesus to cast out the man, in which case the phrase would modify the participle συναχθέντων: ... ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ, συναχθέντων ... The ESV opts for this translation: “When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus ...” (1 Cor. 5:4a, ESV). Commentators Fitzmyer as well as Héring put forth this view in their interpretation.¹¹⁰

A third option is to say that Paul is judging the immoral man in the name of the Lord Jesus. In this case, the prepositional phrase is taken to modify the verb κέκρικα: ... κέκρικα ... ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ... The NIV opts for this interpretation: “I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this” (1 Cor. 5:3b, NIV). Garland, Perkins and Zeller each provide examples of commentators who support this perspective.¹¹¹

A fourth option is to say that the immoral man commits incestuous acts in the name of the Lord Jesus. The prepositional phrase would modify the

109 Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 7 (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 88–89; Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther*, 71–72.

110 Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 236–37; Jean Héring, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1962), 34.

111 Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 166–67; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 206–8; Perkins, *First Corinthians*, 92; Zeller, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 201.

participle which it immediately follows, *κατεργασάμενον*: ... *κατεργασάμενον ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ* ... The translation, in this case, would be “I have already judged as present the one who has done this thing in the name of the Lord Jesus ... ([own translation], 1 Cor. 5:3–4).¹¹² It is suggested here that the fourth option has suffered from tinted analysis. This grammatically probable reading is set aside, not necessarily on syntactical grounds, but because of the predisposition that such a reading has little probability of being the case.

I am not aware of an instance where the argument has been made that this fourth reading is grammatically unlikely. The rationale for avoiding this interpretation is typically related to the ethical conundrum which such an interpretation surfaces. As described by Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, the inadequacies of the first three options

make it all the more surprising that the commentators have consistently ignored the possibility that *en tō onomati* might belong to *katergasamenon*. Why should this logical possibility have been considered unthinkable? *Katergasamenon* is the proximate verbal antecedent, and this hypothesis is open to none of the objections that can be raised against the other opinions. One can only assume that exegetes believed that Paul could never have spoken of the sin of incest as committed ‘in the name of the Lord Jesus’. Not only is such a presupposition bad methodology in that it lays claim to a knowledge that no exegete can attain, but it is contradicted by the whole thrust of the epistle.¹¹³

When examined on its own syntactical merit, it can be seen that this option is actually preferable on grammatical grounds. The other three interpretations reach for a modification which spans across several words in the passage. While Greek does offer flexibility in regard to modifications, weight ought to be given to the word in closest proximity to the modifier. At the very least, an explanation should be offered as to why the word closest to the prepositional phrase would be overlooked in lieu of other options. The burden of proof rests

¹¹² Chrys., *Hom. 1 Cor.* 15:3. This option was contemplated as early as Chrysostom, although he ultimately concluded otherwise in his analysis. Recent scholars who have affirmed this view: Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians*, 11–13; Collins, “The Function of ‘Excommunication’ in Paul,” 253; Harris, “The Beginnings of Church Discipline,” 15–16; William F. Orr and James A. Walther, *1 Corinthians: A New Translation*, Anchor Bible 32 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 185–86; James Benedict, “The Corinthian Problem of 1 Corinthians 5:1–8,” *Brethren Life and Thought* 32, no. 2 (1987): 70–71; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 84; Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 372.

¹¹³ Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians*, 12.

on an explanation of why the most straightforward reading of the text should not be accepted. As noted by Adela Yarbro Collins,

Such an interpretation would be the most natural in terms of the word order, since the phrase would then qualify the word immediately preceding. The translation would be, 'For I ... have already judged the one who so did such a thing in the name of the Lord Jesus.' This translation is not incompatible with Wilhelm Heitmüller's ground-breaking study of the phrase *en to onomati* and related expressions.¹¹⁴

It is instructive to contrast Paul's expression in 1 Corinthians 5:4 with his usage in 2 Thessalonians 3:6 of the phrase ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ:

Παραγγέλλομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ στέλλεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀδελφοῦ ἀτάκτως περιπατοῦντος καὶ μὴ κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν ἣν παρελάβοσαν παρ' ἡμῶν. (Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us., 2 Thess. 3:6)

In this situation, the prepositional phrase modifies the main verb (παραγγέλλομεν) with the indirect object and the vocative appositive intervening. The command is given with the authority of the Lord. This example is particularly pertinent in that the apostle is also addressing the matter of a member of the congregation who has deviated from community standards and is in need of being kept out of the gathering. Paul could have positioned the prepositional phrase in 1 Corinthians 5:4 to modify the main verb more directly, the genitive absolute or the infinitive; however, he did not. His choice appears to have been an intentional one, rather than a careless ambiguity, especially when considered in light of patterned usage of the preposition ἐν within the letter. Within 1 Corinthians, Paul utilizes the preposition ἐν a total of 177 times. By analyzing the usage patterns in relation to substantive and verbal forms, clear patterns emerge. For instance, prepositional phrases beginning with ἐν typically follow the substantive participle which they modify, as the following table demonstrates.

114 Collins, "The Function of 'Excommunication' in Paul," 253. See also Wilhelm Heitmüller, *Im namen Jesu.: Eine sprach.- u. religionsgeschichtliche untersuchung Eine sprach.- u. religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Neuen Testament, speziell zur altchristlichen Taufe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903).

participle + ἐν prepositional phrase ^a	other constructions	ἐν prepositional phrase + participle
1:1 (3x), 1:4, 1:10 (2x), 1:31, 6:4, 11:18, 12:6, 15:18, 15:58	9:24, 10:25	8:10
12 uses	2 uses	1 use

a In most of these examples, the prepositional phrase immediately follows the participle. In two instances (1 Cor. 1:1, 12:6), a direct object intervenes. In one instance (1 Cor. 1:4) an indirect object intervenes. In one instance (1 Cor. 11:18), a pronoun intervenes as a part of a genitive absolute. In all examples, the prepositional phrase comes after the participle, and intervening words are clearly a part of a phrase or clause which includes both the participle and the modifying prepositional phrase.

In 1 Corinthians 9:24 and 10:25, the prepositional phrase does precede the participle; however, Paul employs the definite article to clarify that the prepositional phrase is attached to the participle (e.g., οἱ ἐν σταδίῳ τρέχοντες and τὸ ἐν μακέλλῳ πωλούμενον). Such a construction has a stronger associative force than even ‘participle + ἐν prepositional phrase’ since the article amalgamates the participle and prepositional phrase. On only one occasion in the letter does Paul precede the participle with an ἐν prepositional phrase.¹¹⁵ In 1 Corinthians 8:10, Paul speaks of the one who reclines to dine in a temple (ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον). This is one clear exception to the established pattern followed by Paul throughout 1 Corinthians. This pattern in regard to modification of participles by ἐν prepositional phrases follows a broader pattern of modification of nouns or other substantives. In the situations where substantives are not participles, the modification pattern is even clearer.

115 Two additional passages might be considered in regard to the relationship of participles to ἐν prepositional phrases, although I have classified both in alternate categories. In 1 Corinthians 12:3, the prepositional phrase does precede a nominative participle; however, the nominative participle λαλῶν modifies the substantival usage of οὐδείς, which is the term immediately preceding the prepositional phrase (ὅτι οὐδείς ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ λαλῶν λέγει). In this case, Paul is using two modifiers for the term οὐδείς, thus the prepositional phrase has been classified as immediately following a noun. In 1 Corinthians 15:19 (ἐν Χριστῷ ἡλπικότες ἐσμέν), the prepositional phrase immediately precedes a participle; however, a form of εἰμί is used, thus the usage pattern related to predicate constructions has been applied here. See discussion on the effect of predicate constructions on word order.

noun + ἐν prepositional phrase ^a	other constructions	ἐν prepositional phrase + noun
2:4 (2x), 3:1, 3:18, 3:19, 4:10, 4:17 (2x), 7:15, 8:4, 8:5, 9:18, 11:18, 11:19, 12:3, 12:9 (2x), 12:25, 14:19, 15:23, 15:28, 15:58	6:19	
22 uses	1 use	0 uses

a In all these examples except one, the prepositional phrase immediately follows the noun without any intervening words. In 1 Corinthians 3:18 (εἴ τις δοκεῖ σοφὸς εἶναι ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ), the prepositional phrase does follow the pronoun τις, although several words intervene. It could be that this usage is affected by the usage pattern related to predicate constructions, given the use of εἶναι as a complement of δοκεῖ.

Prepositional phrases beginning with ἐν immediately follow the noun or pronoun which they modify on all but one occasion. The alternate construction in 1 Corinthians 6:19 is identical to the participial constructions identified above, where the definite article amalgamates the prepositional phrase with the participle (τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματός). There are no instances of a ἐν prepositional phrase preceding a substantive. This noticeable tendency in relation to substantives might be contrasted with the usage of ἐν prepositional phrases in relation to verbs. Here we find that the positioning is variously preceding or following the verb.

verb + ἐν prepositional phrase	ἐν prepositional phrase + verb
1:5 (2x), 1:6, 2:6, 2:13 (2x), 3:16, 3:21, 4:2, 4:15, 4:21, 5:1, 5:5, 5:8 (3x), 7:37 (2x), 9:15, 10:2 (2x), 10:5, 11:19, 11:21, 11:22, 14:6 (4x), 14:19, 14:28, 15:12, ^a 15:31, 15:32, 15:41, 15:42 (2x), 15:43 (4x), 15:51–52 (3x), 16:8	1:5, 2:3 (3x), 3:13, 4:4, 4:6, 4:17, 4:21, 6:2, 7:15, 7:17, 7:18, 7:20 (2x), 7:22, 7:24 (2x), 9:9, 10:5, 11:34, 12:3, ^b 14:21 (2x), 14:34, 15:1, 16:14
45 uses	27 uses

a This could be an examples of a prepositional phrase preceding a pronoun, but there is a textual variant which reverses this reading as well. Thus, this this usage is not determinative.
b Taking λέγει as the implied verb.

verb + intervening word(s) + ἐν prepositional phrase	ἐν prepositional phrase + intervening word(s) + verb
1:8, 2:7, 5:9, 6:20, 7:14 (2x), 8:11, ^a 12:18, 12:28, 13:12, 15:3, 16:11, 16:13, 16:19, 16:20 15 uses	1:21, 4:15, 11:13, 11:23, 12:13, 14:35, 15:22 (2x) 8 uses

a This usage deserves particular attention. In this example, the nominative participle is the subject of the verb but immediately followed by the prepositional phrase (ἀπόλλυται γὰρ ὁ ἀσθενὼν ἐν τῇ σῇ γνώσει). It might be argued that this sets a precedent for interpreting ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ in 1 Corinthians 5:4 as modifying a verb from which it is distanced even though it immediately follows a participle. The primary difference between these examples is the nominative usage of the participle in 1 Corinthians 8:11 and the accusative usage in 1 Corinthians 5:4.

‘verb + ἐν prepositional phrase’ pattern	‘ἐν prepositional phrase + verb’ pattern
60 uses total	35 uses total

Paul freely rearranges word order as it relates to ἐν prepositional phrases which modify verbal forms. Approximately two thirds of the time, Paul follows a ‘verb + ἐν prepositional phrase’ pattern. About one third of the time, Paul utilizes a ‘ἐν prepositional phrase + verb’ pattern. These statistics hold true whether or not intervening words are found between the prepositional phrase and the verb. When a predicate construction includes an ἐν prepositional phrase, the same pattern emerges in relation to positioning as is found in other verbs. This is significant in that the prepositional phrase is modifying a substantive in these cases; however, the use of εἰμί shifts the usage pattern to be similar to that of verbal modifications. This does not factor into the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5:3–5, since εἰμί is not used there. It is, nevertheless, a critical point in terms of how the usages have been classified for the broader identification of patterns.

εἰμί usage + ἐν prepositional phrase	ἐν prepositional phrase + εἰμί usage
1:10, 1:30, 2:5 (2x), 9:1, 9:2, 11:25, 14:10, 14:11, 14:33, 15:17	1:11, 14:25, 15:19 (2x)
implied εἰμί usage + ἐν prepositional phrase	ἐν prepositional phrase + implied εἰμί usage
2:4 (2x), 4:20 (2x), 11:11, 16:24 17 uses	3:3, 8:7, 11:30, 15:23 8 uses

The flexibility of word order found with indicative and subjunctive verbs does not turn out to be the case in regard to infinitives. With only one exception, Paul follows an infinitive immediately with an ἐν prepositional phrase when that phrase modifies the infinitive.

infinitive + ἐν prepositional phrase	ἐν prepositional phrase + infinitive
1:7, 1:17, 2:2, 3:18, 7:39, 14:35 6 uses	16:7 1 use

The implication of this syntactical analysis is as follows. The first interpretive option connects the prepositional phrase ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ with παραδοῦναι, following a ‘ἐν prepositional phrase + infinitive’ pattern. If this is the correct syntactical reading, the usage here would be a notable departure from Pauline pattern in 1 Corinthians. The prepositional phrase precedes the infinitive, which only happens one other time in the letter. Moreover, there are intervening words between the prepositional phrase and the infinitive, which never occurs elsewhere in the letter. In terms of Paul’s pattern, this modification is highly unlikely.

The second interpretive option follows a ‘ἐν prepositional phrase + participle’ pattern, where the phrase ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ immediately precedes συναχθέντων. This is also syntactically unlikely in view of the Pauline tendency to avoid placing ἐν prepositional phrases before substantives. Paul shows a clear preference for ἐν prepositional phrases to come after the substantive which they are modifying.

The third interpretive option follows a ‘verb + intervening word(s) + ἐν prepositional phrase’ pattern, where *κέκρικα* is followed by *ὡς παρὼν τὸν οὕτως τοῦτο κατεργασάμενον* and then *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ*. This option is possible in view of Pauline patterns within 1 Corinthians, in that he follows this trajectory two thirds of the time when an ἐν prepositional phrase modifies a verb. Of course, the fact that this is possible does not mean that it is the most probable.

On the other hand, the fourth interpretive option follows the well established ‘substantive + ἐν prepositional phrase’ pattern. In light of the strong usage pattern regarding substantives, this is the reading which most closely follows a typical Pauline approach. Overlooking the substantive participle which it immediately follows must be justified before considering other possibilities. In the absence of strong rationale that the likely pattern was intentionally abandoned by Paul, the preferred reading would be the fourth option. On these grounds, it is argued that the benefit of the doubt must be given to the interpretation that the immoral man commits incest in the name of the Lord.

The insistence that ethically justified incest is an impossibility is not necessarily in line with the tone of Paul’s response either. Wolfgang Schrage asserts that Paul would have reacted with more gradual admonition if the incest had not been such a provocative and flagrant sin:

Hätte Paulus in solchem Fall nicht anders reagiert und eher gemahnt und gewarnt? Die Vermutung, es handle sich um einen öffentlichen, bewußten und sozusagen provokativ-ideologischen Akt, gewinnt dann erheblich an Wahrscheinlichkeit, wenn man “im Namen unseres Herrn Jesus” am Anfang von V 4 auf *κατεργασάμενον* am Schluß von V 3 bezieht. Das hieße dann, der betreffende korinthische Christ hätte geradezu im Namen Jesu seine *πορνεία* vollzogen.¹¹⁶

Schrage not only sees this view as the most logical grammatically within the text, but also as the best explanation for the severity of Paul’s reaction. Of course, his emphasis is the flagrant nature of the sin, while it is being argued here that reputational demise is the primary cause for the severity. Nevertheless, these two causations can certainly work together toward the same result. This

116 [Would not Paul, in such a case, have reacted differently and rather admonished and warned? The supposition that this act was public, deliberate and, so to speak, provocative-ideological gains considerable probability if one relates ‘in the name of our Lord Jesus’ at the beginning of verse 4 with *κατεργασάμενον* at the end of verse 3. This would then mean that the Corinthian Christian in question had actually performed his *πορνεία* in the name of Jesus.] Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 372.

perspective accords with the idea that the Corinthians embraced the incest as an appropriate choice morally.

For some Corinthians, engaging in incest was not actually considered indulgence in depraved barbarian sexual practices. It was a carefully chosen alternate morality, deviating from Roman moral custom in a most notable manner. This conceptual framework also finds expression in the work of Valérie Nicolet, who considers the conversion narrative of the slave or the female within household conversions. Citing Krister Stendahl and Zeba A. Crook, she juxtaposes the individual psychological concept of conversion with a sociological phenomenon. She then suggests that minority parties within the *ecclesia* moved beyond traditional roles and modalities expected of them: “[T]hey push the boundaries of acceptable behaviors, embracing and occupying the space of the abject as the one where they are free to materialize their sex and their piety in their own ways. They also redefine what conversion might cover: not a confessional change, but a changed look at traditional norms.”¹¹⁷ As noted previously, I do not affirm all suppositions put forth by Nicolet; however, we have here another example of sociological analysis which suggests that the Corinthian *ecclesia* in particular conceived of their ingroup identity in terms which challenged traditional Roman sociological norms as a means of creating ingroup distinction. Such a perspective on the situation was driven by a misapplication of the Pauline proposal that gentile standards should not be allowed to judge believers and that believers should be distinctly set apart from unbelievers. In such a case, the social scientific approach to 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 fits a natural reading of the grammar in the text. Following the logical rendering of the text accords well with the sociological realities of honor and shame observed in Corinth.

I would note one point of disagreement with deSilva in his analysis of 1 Corinthians 5:1–6. He argues that motivation for expulsion is strictly a matter for insiders, and there is no concern for outsiders in this exhortation. In addition, he suggests that the Corinthians should have concern for their reputation among other *ecclesiae* in different cities.¹¹⁸ It is not necessary to conclude that Paul’s dismissal of the standards of Gentiles for the court of public opinion means that believers have no regard for the opinion of unbelievers. Their norms cannot be utilized to evaluate whether a Christ-follower receives honor; however, this does not eliminate concern for unbelievers in the sense

117 Nicolet, “Creating a New Sex,” 159. See also Marianne B. Kartzow and Valérie Nicolet, “What is So Complex about ‘Conversion?’,” in Nicolet and Kartzow, *The Complexity of Conversion*, 8; Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, 53–57; Krister Stendahl, “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 56, no. 3 (1963): 200.

118 deSilva, *The Hope of Glory*, 137.

that they might enter into the ingroup as a believer as a result of the testimony of believers. Paul expresses concern for the perception of the outsider in 1 Thessalonians 4:12 where he indicates that behavior is witness toward the unbeliever. Even more compelling in this regard is Philippians 2:15–16. Here Paul makes a claim to honor which is not empty: εἰς καύχημα ἐμοὶ εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ, ὅτι οὐκ εἰς κενὸν ἔδραμον οὐδὲ εἰς κενὸν ἐκοπίασα (I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain, Phil. 2:16). The proof of his claim relates to his exemplary behavior among unbelievers which is emulated by the Philippians to great effect (Phil. 2:15–18). It is possible for honor claims to be made in opposition to the values of unbelievers while still maintaining concern for witness toward those very same unbelievers. Paul's concern for the reputation of the *ecclesia* in Corinth is both inward and outward facing simultaneously. Concern for the purity of the congregation is an expression of desire that the *ecclesia* would function as designed, to be a witness. Derogation was intended for boundary clarity, which brought about purity and also testimony.

In sum, if the man did not deviate out of ignorance and if the benefit of deviation in this regard was far outweighed by the negatives, the option remaining is that the man actually proposed that his behavior was honorable. Socially, this is untenable when viewed through the lens of a majority culture; however, when viewed through the lens of a minority culture where the standards do not match the prevailing norms of society and where God evaluates instead of the court of public opinion, this option finds an explanation. Paul offers refutation of this perspective by emphasizing the disparity between the Corinthian position and God's standards. This may be the reason for which Paul appeals to so much Jewish imagery when addressing a largely Gentile audience. His confrontation of the ethical justification of incest was a demonstration of how the moral ethics adopted by the congregation were not approved by God.¹¹⁹ The Corinthian exchange of shame for honor only succeeded if God approved of their moral choices. As former pagans, the Corinthian believers were not ignorant of the Roman incest taboo, but they may have been woefully ignorant of the prohibitions in the Hebrew scriptures regarding incest. Paul's response to the Corinthians is a clarification of divine standard related to incest. His implicit appeal to the cross through the Passover/leaven analogy (1 Cor. 5:6–8) surfaces imagery of sacrifice and purity.¹²⁰ As the paschal lamb, Jesus was rejected in reference to majority norms and experienced a dishonorable death. Yet, his purity atoned for the sins of believers—a purity which the *ecclesia*

119 Liu, *Temple Purity in 1–2 Corinthians*, 127–145.

120 H.H.D. Williams, "Living as Christ Crucified: The Cross as a Foundation for Christian Ethics in 1 Corinthians," *Evangelical Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (2003): 126–27; Pickett, *The Cross in Corinth*, 109–12.

should reflect in its own practices. Paul argues that rejection in the court of public opinion should not result in impurity on the part of Christ-followers.

2.6 *Identity Clarity through Derogation*

Paul has two primary goals in his response. For the *ecclesia*, he seeks reputation enhancement for the sake of witness to outsiders. For the immoral man, he seeks repentance for the sake of restoration. Both goals are accomplished via derogation of the immoral man. Paul wanted the immoral man to identify with the cross of Christ rather than his own passions. He wanted the *ecclesia* to invite outsiders to join the emerging community. Through clear demarcation of the ingroup boundaries for the *ecclesia* via derogation, both goals were accomplished.

Commentators often set up a dichotomy between the sin of the man and the sin of the community. They emphasize the fact that Paul dwells more prominently on the sin of the community than that of the man.¹²¹ Paul's emphasis on the community's response may not mean that their acceptance is worse than the man's choices. Boundary clarification occurs both in Paul's discipline of the immoral man and also his rebuke of the *ecclesia* for its inappropriate response. The sin of the man and the community are both party to the identity confusion which Paul sees as threatening to the purpose of the *ecclesia*. Thus, calling the man to cease his immorality and the community to put him out are simultaneous exhortations intended for the identical result of identity clarity. Derogation is not merely a process by which hostility may be expressed toward a deviant. It is also a means by which social identity is refined and enforced. Derogation elicits a clarification of and recommitment to group norms in the minds of normative members.

This psychological process is labeled as the black sheep effect, an area of study within social identity theory. As noted by Marques, derogation "protects positive social identity by enforcing normative solidarity."¹²² When considered through the lens of the black sheep effect, Paul's response to the immoral man is not a retaliatory missive, sanctimonious dismay or even moral shock.¹²³ By his response, Paul is engaging in an intentional process of identity formation as he leads the *ecclesia* to a deeper knowledge of what it means to be a Christ-follower.¹²⁴ His actions underscore the importance of corporate identity for the *ecclesia* and the significance of ingroup boundary clarification in

121 Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 199–204; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 201; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 390.

122 Marques et al., "Social Categorization, Social Identification, and Rejection of Deviant Group Members," 406.

123 Contra Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 79–80, 84; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 197.

124 Cf. Conzelmann, MacRae, and Leitch, *1 Corinthians*, 95.

Pauline ecclesiology.¹²⁵ Moreover, in an honor-shame framework, shame has the positive effect of incentivizing conformance to the ingroup norms. Paul demonstrates this tendency in his express goal ἵνα τὸ πνεῦμα σωθῇ (so that his spirit may be saved, 1 Cor. 5:5) ultimately by removal from the *ecclesia*.

Paul is urgent and severe in his reaction to the immoral man, especially in comparison to other weighty matters in 1 Corinthians. Seeing this through the heuristic lens of subjective group dynamics, we note that judgmental extremity is directly correlated to the relevance of norms used for group definition.¹²⁶ If the norms are optimally salient for group definition, the threat to group entitativity is greater, and thus the derogation is stronger. The immoral man violates a central norm rather than an ancillary one. In the black sheep effect, deviation in and of itself is not adequate to initiate negative responses to the ingroup member. Instead, the response from normative members is conditioned by “how the deviation affects the subjective validity of the ingroup norm.”¹²⁷ Thus, it might be observed that Paul’s robust response indicates that the immoral man’s actions hit right at the heart of the identity of the *ecclesia*.¹²⁸

The significance of Paul’s sexual ethics as normative for the community can be seen in other places within 1 Corinthians. For example, when discussing the matter of self-control and moral purity, Paul utilizes his continence as a template for prototypicality (1 Cor. 7:8–9). Here, Paul elevates morality as a group norm, and he attaches the norm to himself as the prototypical figure to which ingroup members ought to aspire. Immorality and idolatry are closely tied in the Pauline perspective. In fact, both would be considered the characteristics of outgroup features when viewed from the social identity perspective. This is a central value which Paul sees as a distinguishing feature when compared to the pagan outgroup.

Within the text of 1 Corinthians, Paul offers correction or clarification to numerous deviations. Yet with the exception of this case of the immoral man, none of these situations warrants expulsion. Paul offers different forms of correction. Paul’s response throughout the letter stands in stark contrast to the instruction he gives regarding the incestuous man. This might be understandable if the other issues were somehow less serious than incest, yet they

125 White, *Paul, Community, and Discipline*, 198–202. See this resource for a particularly concise explanation of the black sheep effect in terms of biblical studies, as well as an application to 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 in particular.

126 Marques, “The Black-Sheep Effect,” 148–49.

127 Marques et al., “Social Categorization, Social Identification, and Rejection of Deviant Group Members,” 402.

128 L.W. Countryman, *Dirt, Greed, and Sex: Sexual Ethics in the New Testament and Their Implications for Today* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988), 11, 237–243.

have life or death importance. As noted in chapter one, the inappropriate practice of the Eucharist has resulted in the death of some Christ-followers (1 Cor. 11:30) and the resurrection is so vital to the faith that misunderstanding or miscommunicating could effect eternal salvation (1 Cor. 15:12–19). In neither case, despite the seriousness, does Paul suggest expulsion. A social identity perspective assists in making sense of a text which otherwise may appear to portray unevenness or inconsistency. Paul is concerned that acceptance of the immoral man within the Corinthian *ecclesia* diminishes or eliminates the ingroup distinctiveness delineated by the core values which forge group boundedness in the Corinthian *ecclesia*. This concern is underscored by the fear that the Corinthian perspective on incest may not be viewed by outsiders merely as shameful but shameless. Derogation via expulsion was necessary so that the *ecclesia* could accomplish its intended purpose. The severity of Paul's derogation relates to the ways in which the immoral man is inappropriately redefining the social identity of the *ecclesia*, and in so doing, obfuscating the witness of the *ecclesia* to outsiders.

3 Conclusion

The immoral man viewed himself with a measure of self-justification. In his framework, the social shame which would have been accorded to him was assuaged by virtue of using an alternate moral framework instead of Roman social norms. In line with the methodological instruction of Paul, the immoral man traded the norms of the majority for an alternate set of norms applied within his ingroup, such that he committed incest ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ (in the name of our Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. 5:4). Paul's argument against the immoral man demonstrates the inadequacy of the man's revised norms. Paul shames the Corinthians for their willingness to follow the immoral man. Paul removes the man from the congregation according to the cultural practices of an honor-shame context. The derogation of the immoral man as a deviant highlights the significant distortion of group defining boundaries brought about by the man. By recategorizing the man as an outgroup member, Paul succeeds in making the moral standards a defining component of group membership and removes the shame which unbelievers would have perceived. In Paul's context, the move augmented the witness of the *ecclesia* in Corinth by making a clear statement regarding the commitments of the *ecclesia* through a cross-centered ethic of purity. The act of derogation served to reinforce and incentivize norm conformance for all members of the *ecclesia*, the immoral man included.

Eucharist and the Immoral Man

The previous chapter has documented that derogation of deviant individuals became a strategy for defining the nature of the *ecclesia* as an ingroup. By offering consequences for non-normative behavior, other group members developed a more defined understanding of the values of the *ecclesia*. Having been disincentivized by virtue of a negative exemplar, ingroup members would likely have adjusted their own behavior to conform more closely to group norms. Group identity clarity, however, is also established through more positive means than derogation. Collective ritual performance offers definition to ingroups, and the *ecclesia* is no exception. The Eucharistic ritual has defined the *ecclesia* from the earliest gatherings of Christ-followers, inculcating ingroup values and enforcing boundaries, with the result that ingroup members and outgroup members might be clearly differentiated from one another. The Eucharistic gathering takes on especial significance in the derogation of the immoral man, since this was the context in which placing him out of the ingroup took place. This chapter will discuss the group-forming capacity of the Eucharist as both a meal and a ritual, along with an analysis of how Pauline conceptions of the Eucharist contributed to group boundedness in Corinth. First, the group-forming capacity of the festive meal in the Mediterranean context will be described and explained. Second, the matter of group formation via the Eucharist will be examined heuristically in light of social identity studies related to ritual. Third, the importance of the sympotic format for enforcing group boundaries related to the immoral man will be demonstrated.

1 Commensality as a Social Phenomenon

The socially formative capacity of a meal might be underestimated in certain contemporary contexts where dining is more functional than social. In contrast, the collectivistic Mediterranean milieu attached a great deal of significance to the dining experience.¹ As L. Michael White noted in relation to

1 “Perhaps most importantly of all, the institutions of eating and drinking, and the literary forms connected with them, were only very distant ancestors of our own, often far removed from anything within the bounds of present-day experience ... telling stories about eating and drinking, and about the conversation which accompanied those activities, was a way

communal dining, cultural contexts have their “own grammar of symbols and etiquette, often times lurking as an implicit template of values and behavior.”² The dining context communicated much about an individual’s association with a group, for it defined the individual in terms of the collective. This process of social definition occurred in terms of many aspects of the meal, including the invitation, the seating arrangement and the topics of conversation. And, it was not merely social status or belonging which the meal had opportunity to influence or articulate. Ideas which became definitional for the group were also shaped during interactions at the meal.

Anthropologist Mary A. Douglas offered anthropological analysis of dining customs which laid the philosophical groundwork for interpreting commensality in terms of sociology.³ She argued that people tend to organize data from their context into structural patterns which were socially discernible.⁴ These suppositions informed later scholarship regarding commensality. As noted by Taussig, “Meals were highly stylized occasions that carried significant social coding, identity formation, and meaning making. Participating in a meal entailed entering into a social dynamic that confirmed, challenged, and negotiated both who the group as a whole was and who the individuals within it were.”⁵

of conjuring up idealized images of community and identity (or in some cases images of aberrant or transgressive community).” Jason König, *Saints and Symposiasts: The Literature of Food and the Symposium in Greco-Roman and Early Christian Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 5–6.

- 2 L.M. White, “Regulating Fellowship in the Communal Meal: Early Jewish and Christian Evidence,” in *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World*, ed. Inge Nielsen and Hanne S. Nielsen, *Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity* 1 (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1998), 178. See also Smit, *Felix Culpa*, 9–10.
- 3 Douglas’ work on meals is but a subset of her corpus. Her analysis in *Natural Symbols* relating to the individual’s orientation to social obligations within a cultural context has parallels with social identity theory. See Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973). She also has fascinating interlocution with the biblical tradition, both in regard to Old and New Testament: Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 5–6. Feely-Harnik even likens Douglas’ approach regarding the symbolic expressions of food to that of Philo: Gillian Feeley-Harnik, *The Lord’s Table: The Meaning of Food in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 10.
- 4 Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 161–62. Douglas proposed social explanations for the detailed taxonomy of prohibited and accepted food within Jewish culture, both ancient and modern.
- 5 Taussig, *In the Beginning was the Meal*, 22. On this point, note that “sectarians in the intertestamental period used dietary rules and other eating practices to address major ethical questions of identity and affiliation in radically changing circumstances food, articulated in feeding, eating, starving, and fasting, provided a powerfully concentrated ‘language’ for debating moral-legal issues and transforming social relations.” Feeley-Harnik, *The Lord’s Table*, xiii.

In the Roman context, meals were more than a pragmatic fueling of the body for efficient completion of tasks. They were a social experience with the capacity to define individuals in relation to their cultural environment. Plutarch elevated the dining experience by distinguishing between pragmatic consumption of food and the experience of formalized dining with others:

Χαρίεντος ἀνδρός, ᾧ Σόσσιε Σενεκίων, καὶ φιλανθρώπου λόγον ἔχουσι
 'Ρωμαῖοι διὰ στόματος, ὅστις ἦν ὁ εἰπών, ἐπεὶ μόνος ἐδείπνησεν, 'βεβρωκέναι,
 μὴ δεδειπνηκέναι σήμερον,' ὡς τοῦ δείπνου κοινωνίαν καὶ φιλοφροσύνην
 ἐφηδύνουσιν αἰεὶ ποθοῦντος.⁶

Of course, there are many varying types of meals in antiquity, just as there are today. This sociological analysis is not referring to routine dining as an individual or family in the course of a typical day, even though such dining contexts do have social implication regarding family relations.⁷ Here we are concerned with the social connections which move beyond the family unit. These meals might be labeled as 'festive dining,' usually with a particular ritualized purpose in mind. The term 'banquet' might be more adequate to the task, except that the word has its own modern connotations which impose anachronistic implications onto the first-century AD context. Suffice it to say that the meals analyzed here relate to those meals which retained a specific social and religious purpose.⁸ While some diversity of form and function existed in various dining occasions, patterns of similarity likewise become evident, such that one might discern the general form of a Greco-Roman sympotic meal.⁹ This observable

6 Plut., *Mor. Quaest. conv.* 7 (697c). "The Romans, Sossius Senecio, are fond of quoting a witty and sociable person who said, after a solitary meal, 'I have eaten, but not dined today,' implying that a 'dinner' always requires friendly sociability for seasoning." Plutarch, *Moralia, Volume IX*, 5.

7 Richard S. Ascough, "Forms of Commensality in Greco-Roman Associations," *The Classical World* 102, no. 1 (2008): 35. This category of dining might be labelled domestic commensality, though the spatial designation can be confusing in that institutional commensality can occur in the domestic space as well.

8 Justin, *Apol.* 65. Of course, it should be noted that the specialness of the meal did not necessarily mean that it was undertaken infrequently. The Lord's Supper seems to have been celebrated weekly in the early stages of the development of the *ecclesia*.

9 Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 175–76; Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft*, 153–54. It is thus more significant that the Lord's Supper was presented at and as a meal than precisely which type of meal served as the original context during Jesus' Passion Week. The meal tradition itself, with all its specific variations, is socially instructive.

pattern follows from the Greek traditions down into Roman times, with only minor variation.¹⁰

The socially defining role of festive dining is well documented. There is no necessity for recapitulating this prior research in terms of its main points, though it should be noted that the works of Dennis E. Smith, Hal Taussig, Matthias Klinghardt and Andrew McGowan are quite influential. As articulated by Smith, the person with whom one dines “defines one’s placement in a larger set of social networks. Because of the clear boundary-defining symbolism of table fellowship in the ancient world, banquets became a significant feature of various identifiable social groups.”¹¹ Here we will draw out points of application regarding how Roman dining customs directly influenced group-forming norms, and specifically how the Lord’s Supper, as an expression of the sympotic form, contributed to entitativity in the Corinthian context.

The Corinthian *ecclesia*, along with other *ecclesiae* around the empire, was navigating a significant transition in boundary redefinition. The Jewish synagogue provided clear markers for inclusion within the community through circumcision and observation of dining regulations. As the decisions of the Council of Jerusalem were implemented within the context of the *ecclesiae*, the inclusion of Gentiles was more readily accommodated. Yet, with the loss of the clear boundary markers of circumcision and halachic observations, the *ecclesia* needed some means by which inclusion could be conveyed to both insiders and outsiders. The Greco-Roman festive meal provided just such a venue.¹² The Eucharistic meal reinforced the ethical distinctions which defined the *ecclesia*. Six features of the festive meal describe how the Lord’s Supper became a tool for group boundary demarcation in Corinth.

1.1 *Festive Meals Forged Communal Relationships*

Festive dining afforded an opportunity for the formation of new relationships and deepening of existing friendships. Plutarch distinguished the deeply bonded relationships which could be forged over a glass of wine at a symposium from the beneficial, yet more superficial acquaintances which might be attained through glad-handing and networking in the marketplace:

10 Peter Lampe, “Das korinthische Herrenmahl im Schnittpunkt hellenistisch-römischer Mahlpraxis und paulinischer Theologia Crucis (1 Kor 11,17–34),” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 82, 3–4 (1991): 186. On the matter of standardized features in Greco-Roman dining customs as well as Jewish, see also Smith and Taussig, *Many Tables*, 21–30; Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft*, 153–54.

11 Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 9.

12 Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 184–85.

ὥστε δεῖν μὴ πρότερον ἀναλύειν ἢ κτήσασθαι τινα τῶν συγκατακειμένων καὶ παρόντων εὖνουν ἑαυτῷ καὶ φίλον. εἰς ἀγορὰν μὲν γὰρ ἐμβάλλουσι πραγμάτων εἵνεκεν καὶ χρειῶν ἐτέρων, εἰς δὲ συμπόσιον οἱ γε νοῦν ἔχοντες ἀφικνοῦνται κτησόμενοι φίλους οὐχ ἥττον ἢ τοὺς ὄντας εὐφρανοῦντες. διότι τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ζητεῖν ἐκφορὰν ἀνελεύθερον ἂν εἴη καὶ φορτικόν, τὸ δὲ φίλων πλέον ἔχοντας ἀπιέναι καὶ ἡδὺ καὶ σεμνὸν ἔστι.¹³

Plutarch also reiterates the aforementioned shortcomings of a functional approach to food consumption. If feasting on the pleasures of food and drink are the end goal, the diner is short-sighted indeed: καὶ τούναντίον ὁ τούτου παραμελῶν ἄχαριν αὐτῷ καὶ ἀτελῇ τὴν συνουσίαν ποιεῖ καὶ ἅπεισι τῇ γαστρὶ σύνδειπνος οὐ τῇ ψυχῇ γεγονώς.¹⁴ The true goal is φιλοφροσύνης εἰς εὖνοιαν τελευτώσης.¹⁵ The formation of friendship and the dining experience cannot be separated. Plutarch goes on to explain that it is the wine combined with conversation which makes the impression of the official seal of friendship. Wine without conversation would be as fruitless as conversation without wine. It is the dining experience which forges relationship.

1.2 Festive Meals Encouraged Articulation of Ideas

Commensality provided opportunity for discussion of ideas and the development of ideological positions. The Greco-Roman sympotic tradition included first a meal (δείπνον) followed by debate, locution and sometimes entertainment (συμπόσιον). Greco-Roman symposia were often reputed to contain bawdy entertainment or sensual interaction during this drinking phase of the meal.¹⁶ Nevertheless, there was a more respected form of symposia where this

- 13 Plut., *Mor. Quaest. conv.* 4 (660a–b). “That is, we should not let a party break up before we have made a new friend and well-wisher among the other guests and fellow diners. People rush to the market place on business or for some other practical purpose; they attend a party—at least if they’re intelligent—as much to gain new friends as to give a good time to the old. For though it would be low and vulgar to wish to carry off anything else, it is both a pleasure and a distinction to come away with a profitable addition to the number of one’s friends.” Plutarch, *Moralia, Volume VIII: Table-Talk, Books 1–6*, trans. P.A. Clement, H.B. Hoffleit, Loeb Classical Library 424 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 293.
- 14 Plut., *Mor. Quaest. conv.* 4 (660b). “[A]nyone who neglects to do so [that is to develop friendships, ζητεῖν ... φίλων πλέον ἔχοντας ἀπιέναι] makes the social occasion incomplete and unrewarding to himself; he departs after having partaken only with his stomach, not his mind.” Plutarch, *Moralia, Volume VIII*, 293.
- 15 Plut., *Mor. Quaest. conv.* 4 (660b). “the amiability that leads to friendship” Plutarch, *Moralia, Volume VIII*, 293.
- 16 Plin., *HN* 14.28. Pliny the Elder describes raucous drinking parties where the excess of wine created embarrassing scenarios. Mart. *Spect.* 11.6. Martial argues for a strong mix of drink at the feast of Saturnalia. See also Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 34–37.

drinking phase was marked by serious philosophical dialogue. This was the form which the *ecclesia* modelled, no doubt.¹⁷ During this latter portion of the dining protocols, the thinking of participants was stimulated, answers to questions were formulated and ideas were sharpened. Plutarch emphasized the role that a listener had in response to a speaker:

καίτοι καὶ συνδείπνου τι χαρίεντος ἔργον ἐστὶ, πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον ἀκροατοῦ. κοινωνὸς γάρ ἐστι τοῦ λόγου καὶ συνεργὸς τοῦ λέγοντος, καὶ οὐ τὰ μὲν ἐκείνου πλημμελήματα πικρῶς ἐξετάζειν ὀφείλει κατὰ ῥῆμα καὶ πρᾶγμα προσάγων τὴν εὐθυναν, αὐτὸς δ' ἀνευθύνως ἀσχημονεῖν καὶ πολλὰ σολοικίζειν περὶ τὴν ἀκρόασιν.¹⁸

Inasmuch as identity is forged by congruity of thinking, the symposium was an occasion where identity was formed by virtue of dialogical interaction.

1.3 *Festive Meals Included and Excluded by Invitation*

Not only did the festive meal create an opportunity for relationship formation and ideological dialogue, but it also provided a notable demonstration of belonging or exclusion through the issuing of invitations. Formal dining banquets were typically planned in advance. Lists of invitees were drawn up with care. Invitations were put into writing, and they were conveyed in person to the recipients by a servant.¹⁹ The process of determining who might come was a means of social determination since attendance was a regulated affair. Plutarch again provides insight here, noting the importance of selecting the appropriate guests for a meal, just as much as the topics of conversation

17 Cf. Ephesians 5:18 where the drinking of excessive wine is set aside for singing praises to the Lord. Singing would have been an important part of the typical religious libation which began the sympotic phase of the meal. Here, Christ-followers are exhorted to avoid drunkenness and pursue edifying interaction instead.

18 Plut., *Mor. De aud.* 14. "And yet even a well-bred guest at dinner has a function to perform, much more a hearer; for he is a participant in the discourse and a fellow-worker with the speaker, and he ought not rigorously to examine the speaker's little slips, applying his criticism to every word and action, while he himself, without being subject to any criticism, acts unhandsomely and commits many gross improprieties in the matter of listening." Plutarch, *Moralia, Volume 1: The Education of Children. How the Young Man Should Study Poetry. On Listening to Lectures. How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend. How a Man May Become Aware of His Progress in Virtue*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt, Loeb Classical Library 197 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), 245.

19 Chan-Hie Kim, "Papyrus Invitation," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94, no. 3 (1975): 397. The addressee was usually not specified in such invitations, since the invitation would have been repeated multiple times as the servant visited the houses of various invitees.

are carefully considered beforehand: ὅθεν ἄξιόν ἐστι μηδὲν ἡττον λόγους ἢ φίλους δεδοκιμασμένους Επαρалаμβάνειν ἐπὶ τὰ δεῖπνα.²⁰ Those who were not invited might have been overlooked, or they might not have met the protocol for an invitation. Alternately, the snub might have been related to a past offense. Being overlooked was consequential, but being uninvited after having received a prior invitation would have the social force of formal banishment in terms of how that person might be perceived within the community at large.²¹ In this sense, the notion of belonging and ingroup identity was shaped by sympotic customs related to invitations.²²

1.4 Festive Meals Displayed Social Stratification

The formal dining experience served as a picture of the social stratification by virtue of seating arrangement and how the food was served. Guests of more import were invited to recline whereas those of lesser social status would be seated. In Greek times, it was the men who reclined and women were seated in an alternate location, although by the first century AD, there is evidence of reputable women reclining at the table.²³ Even the location at which one reclined indicated the status of the individual in the view of the host. Plutarch gives detailed descriptions of the options available in terms of situating reclining guests.²⁴ Hosts also expressed their opinion of guests by virtue of how they were served. Those of lower social standing may have received a smaller portion of banquet fare or heavily diluted wine. Martial uses this as a subject of satire when complaining that his host refused to treat him as an equal: “cum vocer ad cenam non iam venalis ut ante, / cur mihi non eadem quae tibi cena datur?”²⁵ In the context of association meal, both inherited status and achieved status were conveyed via seating arrangement. Attendees would be seated according to their rank and role within the association. Whether dining at an invitation-only meal in a home, at an association meetings or at a temple in honor of a divinity, such social disparities would come into full relief since

20 Plut., *Mor. Quaest. conv.* 7 (697e). “Therefore subjects of discourse, like friends, should be admitted to dinners only if they are of proved quality.” Plutarch, *Moralia, Volume IX: Table-Talk, Books 7–9. Dialogue on Love.*, trans. Edwin L. Minar, F.H. Sandbach, and W.C. Helmbold, Loeb Classical Library 425 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 7.

21 Taussig, *In the Beginning was the Meal*, 48–49.

22 Smit, *Felix Culpa*, 83–84.

23 Katherine M.D. Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet: Images of Conviviality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 22.

24 Plut., *Mor. Quaest. conv.* 1.3.1.

25 Mart., *Spect.* 3.60. “Since I am no longer invited to dinner at a price as formerly, why don’t I get the same dinner as you?” Martial, *Epigrams, Volume 1: Spectacles, Books 1–5.*, 231; cf. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 45.

social stratification was on display at the meal. Stratification and emphasis on placement formed social boundary markers which defined a group.²⁶

1.5 *Festive Meals Invoked the Divine*

Festive meals were closely associated with the blessing of a particular deity. Between the dinner portion and the symposium portion of the meal, the host would make a libation which recognized or invoked the pleasure of a deity over the proceedings.²⁷ Commonly, the libation also included some form of song which lauded the deity.²⁸ Within some cults, the deity invited the worshippers to dine. One of the most compelling examples of this is the mystery cult of Serapis, which was present in Roman Corinth. Papyri documenting the cult of Sarapis utilize the terms 'dining' and 'Lord' in reference to the meal: δειπνήσαι εἰς κλείνην τοῦ κυρίου Σαράπιδος ἐν τῇ Σαραπίῳ.²⁹ The invocation of a deity transformed a symposium into a religious expression of devotion to a deity.³⁰ This transformation had implication for the nature of the ingroup gathered since the worship of a deity was not incidental to the identity of participants.

26 Smit, *Felix Culpa*, 82–83.

27 Ath. 15.665b. "σπονδὰς δ' ἔπειτα παραχέας τὸν κότταβον παροίσω." Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, Volume VIII: Books 13.594b–14., trans. S. Douglas Olson, Loeb Classical Library 519 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 5. "Then, after I pour the libations, I'll bring them the cottabus-equipment." This sentence is positioned in between description of the meal, followed by washing up. The term cottabus references an after dinner drinking game. Cf. Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft*, 101–11.

28 Ath. 4.149c. "μετὰ δὲ τὸ δείπνον σπονδὰς ἐποιούντο οὐκ ἀπονιψάμενοι τὰς χεῖρας, ἀλλ' ἀποματτόμενοι τοῖς ψωμοῖς, καὶ τὴν ἀπομαγδαλίαν ἕκαστος ἀπέφερε, τοῦτο ποιοῦντες ἕνεκα τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀμφοδοῖς γινομένων νυκτερινῶν φόβων. ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν σπονδῶν παιὰν ᾄδεται." Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, Volume II: Books 3.106e–5., trans. S. Douglas Olson, Loeb Classical Library 208 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 215–17. "After the dinner, they made libations; but rather than washing their hands first, they wiped themselves clean with pieces of bread, which they took with them when they left. They did this because of the frightening events that occurred in the streets at night. After the libations, a paean is sung."

29 POxy. 31.2592. "to dine in the couch of the lord Serapis in the Serapion." Bradley B. Blue, "The House Church at Corinth and the Lord's Supper: Famine, Food Supply and the Present Distress," *Criswell Theological Review* 5, no. 2 (1991): 223.

30 Léon-Dufour, *Sharing the Eucharistic Bread*, 35. This idea of the invocation of deity in the meal serving as a group-forming norm is also present from the Jewish perspective. Eating is an expression of shared life. When people share a table together, they recognize the common source of their sustenance. Specifically, from a Jewish perspective, the meal is blessed so participation is also sharing in the reception of God's grace.

1.6 *Festive Meals Enabled Formal Affiliation*

Meals offered an opportunity to express formal affiliation with a particular group. Such affiliation included an affirmation of the group's beliefs and codes of conduct. As noted by Lanuwabang Jamir, "The partaking in the fellowship table of the cults and religious associations was synonymous with identifying with its beliefs and likewise similar to acquiring one's identity in relation to the group."³¹ Participation in a dining experience was simultaneously an affirmation of the intent and purpose of those gathered as well as an implicit agreement to abide by the protocols and procedures of the context. When dues were required for a *collegia*, a member was allowed to dine only if that individual was in compliance.³² Roman associations had clear membership rules and the dining experience within the association was an important expression of inclusion. The meal was the means by which membership in the association was affirmed and publicly declared.³³ Richard S. Ascough labels this aspect of dining as segregative commensality, examples of which can be found in inscriptions related to the associations of Asclepius and Hygeia, the Iobacchoi and Zeus Hypsistos.³⁴

2 Commensal Ritual and Social Identity

It is not only the sociological aspects of commensality which create group definition but also the psychological. Ritual has an identity-forming function within groups. Rituals "are forms of behaviour ... which express and embody the symbols and stories central to a religion. Ritual activities are repeated and recognized by a group; they are rule-governed in the sense that their procedures are generalised and repeatable."³⁵ Social scientific studies indicate a correlation between collective ritual performance and group solidarity in numerous ways. For instance, ritual performance emphasizes the values and norms which characterize the group, serving as a reinforcement to the group

31 Lanuwabang Jamir, *Exclusion and Judgment in Fellowship Meals: The Socio-Historical Background of 1 Corinthians 11:17–34* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 77.

32 The mystery religions provide yet another example of how meals mediated membership affiliation. In particular, the cult of Mithras utilized a cult meal and had a clear process of initiation. Manfred Clauss, *The Roman Cult of Mithras: The God and His Mysteries* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2017), 108–113.

33 Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 227–36; Richard S. Ascough, "Social and Political Characteristics of Greco-Roman Association Meals," in Smith and Taussig, *Meals in the Early Christian World*, 59–72.

34 Ascough, "Forms of Commensality in Greco-Roman Associations," 37–38.

35 Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence*, 80. See also Smit, *Felix Culpa*, 9–11.

entitativity. This is accomplished through the combination of cognitive and affective strategies:

[T]he ability to consciously ritualize actions created the necessary conditions for the creation, transmission, and reinforcement of social norms. These necessary conditions are pedagogical and emotional—that is, ritualized actions teach normative content and emotionally bind people to that content.³⁶

Moreover, ritual creates mutual trust among group members because collective ritual performance enables peers to discern credible motives on the part of other group members.³⁷ Yet other social scientific studies observe the social or physical cost for a participant in ritual.³⁸ Costly participation, especially in public rituals, serves as a verification of loyalty on the part of participants, which contributes to group entitativity as well. When collective rituals gather persons of similar commitment and perspective into shared space for identical activity, a sense of belonging manifests from the physical and ideological proximity along with the repetition of meaningful acts.³⁹ Group cohesion is also developed through the ways in which ritual creates esteem and admiration for persons of authoritative roles within the group.⁴⁰

Rituals are multi-valiant. They might be conducted in relation to non-religious aspects of life, and they can also be private in nature. However, public and religious rituals, which is the nature of the Eucharist, have an empirical correlation to intragroup cooperation.⁴¹ Paul's first letter to the Corinthians evidences the value of ritual for his enforcement of ingroup boundaries. When

36 Joseph Rossano, "The Essential Role of Ritual in the Transmission and Reinforcement of Social Norms," *Psychological Bulletin* 138, no. 3 (2012): 532.

37 Joseph Henrich, "The Evolution of Costly Displays, Cooperation and Religion: Credibility Enhancing Displays and Their Implications for Cultural Evolution," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 30, no. 4 (2009): 244–60; Jonathan A. Lanman, "The Importance of Religious Displays for Belief Acquisition and Secularization," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 27, no. 1 (2012): 49–65.

38 William Irons, "Religion as a Hard-to-Fake Sign of Commitment," in *Evolution and the Capacity for Commitment*, ed. Randolph M. Nesse (New York: Russell Sage, 2001), 292–309; Richard Sosis and Eric R. Bressler, "Cooperation and Commune Longevity: A Test of the Costly Signaling Theory of Religion," *Cross-Cultural Research* 37, no. 2 (2003): 211–39.

39 Emma Cohen, Roger Mundry, and Sebastian Kirschner, "Religion, Synchrony, and Cooperation," *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 4, no. 1 (2014): 20–30; Scott S. Wiltermuth and Chip Heath, "Synchrony and Cooperation," *Psychological Science* 20, no. 1 (2009): 1–5.

40 David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 24–29.

41 As seen in the study of secular and religious kibbutz members by Richard Sosis and Bradley J. Ruffle, "Religious Ritual and Cooperation: Testing for a Relationship on Israeli Religious and Secular Kibbutzim," *Current Anthropology* 44, no. 5 (2003): 713.

it comes to understanding who was considered an ingroup member and who was an outgroup member, the Eucharistic ritual reinforced notions of acceptance and affiliation with the *ecclesia*. In fact, it might even be argued that the ritual developed identification and identity fusion. Group boundedness was clarified for insiders and outsiders through participation in or observation of the Eucharist. For the insider, group boundary clarity came through repetition of the ritual and the sense of belonging which eventuated. For the outsider, awareness of the ritual marked the participants as members of an identifiable social grouping. The resultant boundary demarcations categorized individuals in such a way that group membership could be enforced both internally and externally.

Three themes surface in the Pauline discussion of the Eucharist in 1 Corinthians, which might be summarized in the following descriptors: 1) assembly, 2) unity and 3) purity. The identity formation strategy which Paul was undertaking in his exhortations regarding the Eucharist can be seen by analyzing each descriptor heuristically through social identity studies. The assembly of the *ecclesia* can be examined in light of the social effects of gathering *en masse* for religious purposes.⁴² The unity of the *ecclesia* can be considered through a correlation of group belief with group identity.⁴³ And, the purity of the *ecclesia* can be presented in light of how ingroup perceptions of outsiders enhances cohesion according to the identity-differentiation hypothesis.⁴⁴

2.1 *Assembly: Eucharist as Cultivator of Belonging*

The Eucharist in Corinth was a ritual meal, performed in a social context. The gathering of believers for the performance of this ritual had an important effect on the social identity of the *ecclesia*. Proximity to fellow adherents had the ability to bring recognition of belonging, validation of beliefs and solidarity with each other. While this sense of belonging could and did develop through diverse means in the life of the Corinthian *ecclesia*, there was a particular sense

42 Hani Alnabulsi et al., "Understanding the Impact of the Hajj: Explaining Experiences of Self-Change at a Religious Mass Gathering," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 50 (2020): 292–308; Nick Hopkins et al., "Social Relations in Crowds: Recognition, Validation and Solidarity," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 49 (2019): 1283–97.

43 Daniel Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs: A Conception for Analyzing Group Structure, Processes, and Behavior* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1990); Daniel Bar-Tal, "Group Beliefs as an Expression of Social Identity," in *Social Identity: International Perspectives*, ed. Stephen Worchel (London: SAGE, 1998).

44 Steve Hinkle and R.J. Brown, "Intergroup Differentiation and Social Identity: Some Links and Lacunae," in Abrams and Hogg, *Social Identity Theory*; Richard N. Lalonde, "Testing the Social Identity-Intergroup Differentiation Hypothesis: 'We're Not American eh!'" *British Journal of Social Psychology* 41 (2002).

in which the assembly of believers for the Eucharist contributed to the identity of the *ecclesia*. The Roman concepts of fellowship (κοινωνία), dining (ἐσθίω) and gathering (συνέρχομαι, συναναμείγνυμι)⁴⁵ were very closely interconnected in the Mediterranean context. The Eucharistic texts of 1 Corinthians are replete with these verbs and their cognates, and a few examples suffice. The Corinthians were not to associate (συναναμείγνυσθαι, 1 Cor. 5:11) with the immoral man or even to eat (συνεσθίειν, 1 Cor. 5:11) with him. Paul describes the Eucharistic elements (cup and bread) in terms of κοινωνία (fellowship, 1 Cor. 10:16) with Christ. As Paul discourages association with idolatrous worship, he expresses concern about the Corinthians becoming a participant with demons: ὑμᾶς κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων γίνεσθαι (you to become sharers in demons, 1 Cor. 10:20). He emphasizes a similar point in his admonition to avoid the table of demons: οὐ δύνασθε τραπέζης κυρίου μετέχειν καὶ τραπέζης δαιμονίων (you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons, 1 Cor. 10:21b). Those who eat meat sacrificed to idols share at the altar (1 Cor. 10:18). Likewise, the Corinthians are coming together to eat (1 Cor. 11:33).⁴⁶ From an insider perspective, the Eucharist was an invitation-only banquet where admission was contingent on initiation into the *ecclesia* via baptism. When the *ecclesia* dined together ritually, it was intended to convey a sense of belonging to the ingroup in the same sense that kinship language created a notion of connectedness. In antiquity, the ability to express solidarity was not as accessible without some form of physical proximity. Gathering together was a practical means of expressing support for others within the group.

Studies of religious pilgrimage participants in both Muslim (Hajj) and Hindu (Magh Mela) contexts yielded interesting results regarding the identity-forming capacity of these events on their participants.⁴⁷ Assembling with

45 This term, used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:9, 11 (cf. 2 Thess. 3:14) has the idea of mixing something up and is used by Athenaeus of Naucratis in the sense of meeting with people for the sake of conversation and business (though, in this case, for ill purpose) in Ath. 6.68: “ὅν οἱ μὲν Γεργίνοι συναναμειγνύμενοι τοῖς κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ἔν τε τοῖς ἐργαστηρίοις καὶ ταῖς ἀγοραῖς ὡτακουστοῦσι κατασκόπων ἔχοντες τάξιν.” Athenaeus, *The Learned Banqueters*, Volume III: Books 6–7., trans. S. Douglas Olson, Loeb Classical Library 224 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 177. “The Gerginoi behave like spies, mingling with the people throughout the city and keeping their ears open in the workshops and the marketplaces.”

46 Note the usages of συνέρχομαι: συνέρχεσθε (1 Cor. 11:17), συνερχομένων (1 Cor. 11:18, 20), συνερχόμενοι (1 Cor. 11:33), συνέρχησθε (1 Cor. 11:34). Note frequent use of form of ἐσθίω throughout (1 Cor. 11:20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34).

47 These studies have application to this current analysis in that they both evaluate a religious ritual with performative aspects. There are many points of correspondence, including the fact that participants derived from various social classes and ethnicities,

other persons for mutual participation in religious ritual instigates a three-fold psychological process: recognition, validation and solidarity. Recognition occurs when other ingroup members acknowledge a person's self-perception of belonging, bringing a sense of reinforcement to one's own social categorizations. Validation occurs when shared beliefs, values and norms are found to be credible as a result of consensual agreement. Solidarity is the willingness to express and receive support for and from other group members.⁴⁸ Collective expression of emotion leads to stronger sense of corporate identity. Affirmation of shared religious values, for example unity, also leads to enhanced identification with the group. Ritual enactment creates feedback loops where others affirm and reinforce social identity. This is especially the case when the enactment comes in the form of a tangible, observable ritual which is participated in mutually by ingroup members.⁴⁹ The very act of assembling added to the sense for Corinthian Christ-followers that they belonged to the *ecclesia*, to a specifically defined group. The social interactions of assembly reinforced the self-categorization made by individuals, such that the collective concepts of fictive kinship were enhanced by gathering together. Thus, the gathering was very important, and it was also important that it be undertaken without confusing the symbolism of the ritual, something the Corinthians clearly had failed to do.⁵⁰ A critical aspect of the Eucharistic ritual was the commonality of belief expressed, which is expressed in the concept of unity.

2.2 *Unity: Eucharist as Common Confession*

The Passover was intended to memorialize truths about God for subsequent generations. The Lord's Supper continued this tradition and had similar performative value. In the case of both dining rituals, a specific event in the history of salvation is recounted with a sense of application to the ongoing situation of the person who commemorates the event. The protection from death via the blood of the Passover lamb and the atonement brought on the cross by Jesus' blood are central concepts in the respective Jewish and Christian conceptualizations of salvation. Definition of the Lord's Supper as a ritual and its significance come early in the development of the Christ-follower

the commonality in social identity deriving from the shared experience of ritual participation. These studies focus on the public gathering through the use of the term 'crowd' to describe the event. This type of public pilgrimage differs somewhat from the weekly gatherings of Christ-followers in first century. Nonetheless, the points of correspondence in terms of how ritual shapes identity is quite salient.

48 Hopkins et al., "Social Relations in Crowds," 1284–86.

49 Alnabulsi et al., "Understanding the Impact of the Hajj," 294–95.

50 Smit, *Felix Culpa*, 78–99.

movement.⁵¹ Corporate acknowledgment of the event by the ritual naturally flows into a common confession of core beliefs. Unity might be defined as the value which expresses this common confession. Unity is reflected in group solidarity, embodying the very principles which inform social categorization to begin with. Daniel Bar-Tal has defined group beliefs in two aspects: 1) beliefs are convictions which members of the group share and 2) beliefs are convictions which members have mutually adopted as a defining component of what bonds the group together.⁵² Beliefs provide a “cognitive basis”⁵³ for both the formation of the group and its perpetuation through deepened connection.

Paul’s concept of unity was rooted in common belief rather than sameness of person. In other words, members of the *ecclesia* might have varying gifts, but that which drew them together remained identical. The physical unity of the congregation, as displayed in the gathering of the *ecclesia*, is emblematic of the metaphysical unity which exists at all times via belief. This theme of unity, and concomitantly the countering of disunity, resonates from start to finish in 1 Corinthians. Paul begins his letter, even before confronting the schisms of the Corinthian *ecclesia*, by affirming the unity of the congregation on the basis of each person’s common calling in Christ. All have been called by God and in return have called upon God (1 Cor. 1:2). Each has been sanctified (1 Cor. 1:2), has received grace (1 Cor. 1:4,7), their testimony has been confirmed (1 Cor. 1:6) and they await Christ’s return (1 Cor. 1:8). The apostle spells out his concept of unity at the outset. Unity resides in common confession, literally in saying the same thing (1 Cor. 1:10). The capacity to do so results from being of the τῷ αὐτῷ νοῖ (same thinking, 1 Cor. 1:10) and τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ (same intention, 1 Cor. 1:10). This unity had been squandered by sectarian loyalties (1 Cor. 1:11–17). Paul counters this errant thinking with the analogy of sowing seed. While some have lauded Paul and others Apollos, neither is to be elevated above the other. Though diverse, they share in the common practice of growing seed in the same earth, metaphorically speaking. Paul and Apollos are different persons, contributing diversely to a common process (1 Cor. 3:4–9). Paul then adds the analogy of a building where the foundation is Christ (1 Cor. 3:10, 18–23). Just as the soil is common to each person working the ground, so is a foundation common to each person building a structure.

As Paul moves along in his letter, the situation of the immoral man provides an ironic unity. Even though division characterizes the *ecclesia*, they appear united regarding the endorsement of the immoral man. Paul encourages unity

51 Drimbe, *The Church of Antioch and the Eucharistic Traditions* (ca. 35–130 CE), 49–52.

52 Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, 36–46; Tucker, *You Belong to Christ*, 47.

53 Bar-Tal, “Group Beliefs as an Expression of Social Identity,” 94.

with him, the Lord and truth, challenging them to respond together in putting the man out of the *ecclesia*. The matter of lawsuits shows that two wealthy members of the *ecclesia* are using the legal system to adjudicate against each other, exhibiting disunity among outsiders (1 Cor. 6:1–11). In regard to sexual immorality, Paul notes again ironically that the Corinthians were finding unity with a prostitute when the spiritual unity present in the act of sexual consummation ought to be reserved for relationship with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:12–20) and also one's spouse (1 Cor. 7:1–5). Diversity of gender, social status or marital status (even marriage to an unbeliever) does not negate the possibility of unity. Christ-followers are to maintain the marriage vows in unity with their unbelieving spouse (1 Cor. 7:10–16).

The *ecclesia* can find unity amidst the diversity of male and female, slave and free, Jewish and Gentile, single and married. Paul then addresses the matter of meat sacrificed to idols, a source of significant confusion for the Corinthian *ecclesia*. He anchors his advice in a theological proclamation: εἰς θεὸς ... εἰς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (in God ... in the Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 8:6). The oneness of God enables the believer who is freed by his knowledge regarding idol meat to prefer the weaker brother, and in so doing to bring unity to the *ecclesia* (1 Cor. 8:9–13). The commonality of purpose is underscored in 1 Corinthians 10:1–4 where all were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized, all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink. Paul applies this unity through Eucharistic language. The believer fellowships with Christ through the breaking of bread and blessing of wine, developing an organic spiritual unity (1 Cor. 10:16). The oneness of the bread is twice equated with the oneness of the body, meaning the *ecclesia* in this context (1 Cor. 10:17). This union with Christ and fellow Christ-followers contrasts the Eucharist with dining at the table of demons, where ostensibly a union with demons and unbelievers would occur in a similar fashion as should be occurring with Christ and believers (1 Cor. 10:18–21).

Paul's attention to the matter of order within the worship of the *ecclesia* is a subtheme of the unity narrative in the letter. He encourages head coverings by virtue of appeal to the orderly submission of female to male and male to the Lord (1 Cor. 11:3–16). He prescribes direction for the use of tongues and prophecy in the assembly (1 Cor. 14:1–19). Of course, the divisions surrounding the practice of the Lord's Supper are of critical focus for Paul (1 Cor. 11:17–34). The most explicit teaching on unity within the letter is found in 1 Corinthians 12:1–31 where Paul lays out his vision in specific with an appeal to the parable of Menenius Agrippa. Paul argues that believers have different gifts and different roles, but a common confession and the same God. The outlines of this confession are found in 1 Corinthians 12:3 by saying "Jesus is Lord" and even more explicitly in 1 Corinthians 15 in the resurrection of Christ.

This unity theme in 1 Corinthians is strategically affirmed by the ritual of the Eucharist. The letter to the Corinthians evidences a horizontal and a vertical dimension to the unity theme. The presence of the risen Lord as host at the meal brought a vertical sense of connectivity. While the original disciples of Jesus had been able to recline, eat and interact with Jesus, the next generation was able to conceive of him as spiritually present such that real connection was possible through the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 5:5). This union with Christ was then to be translated into unity among the members of the *ecclesia* in all the ways Paul has laid out in the letter. The egalitarian vision Paul has for the *ecclesia* derives from the symbolism contained in the Eucharist. All members of the *ecclesia* stand in need of redemption and atonement, which is symbolized in the bread and wine. The translation of vertical to horizontal unity needed to be reflected in abolishment of social hierarchy within the dining practices. An examination of 1 Corinthians 11:17–34, however, shows that no such abolishment had taken place. For Paul, this dismissal of his hope for group solidarity was equivalent to setting the gospel asunder.⁵⁴

The language of atonement is socially formative in and of itself. Paul's inclusion of this motif in the words of pronouncement (1 Cor. 11:24–25) are not simply a tipping of his hand toward a paradosis. It is also Paul's intentional effort at fostering solidarity among the *ecclesia*. As noted by Valeriy A. Alikin,

In his reaction to Jesus' death, God treated Jesus and his followers as members of one corporate entity: on the one hand, he vindicated Jesus, and on the other hand, he justified those who remained faithful to Jesus after his death. Thus, in responding to Jesus' death, God confirmed the corporate unity of Jesus and his followers. Therefore, Paul can take the death of Jesus as an event of fundamental significance with regard to the unity of Christ and his followers. Consequently, when Paul wanted to urge the Corinthian Christians to adopt a more socially-minded behaviour, it was quite natural for him to use the theme of Jesus' death as a reference point: this death was the fundament of the post-Easter Church; that is, of the unity of Christ and his Church.⁵⁵

54 1 Corinthians 12 is less explicit in regard to the Eucharist, though analogies are still present. We have the drinking of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), not to mention the significance of the body. The term 'body' does double duty in 1 Corinthians in order to explain both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of unity. Note the connection of body to bread in the preceding chapters (1 Cor. 10:17, 11:27).

55 Valeriy A. Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering: Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to Third Centuries*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 102 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 107.

Moreover, the Eucharist as explained by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:17–33 envisions the spiritualized, though not wholly analogized, corporeal connection of the *ecclesia* with Christ. By using the image of the human body to explain the nature of the *ecclesia* in conjunction with the emphasis on Jesus' physical body in regard to the atonement, there is an overlap of imagery. As members of the *ecclesia* perceived the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist ritual, they also sensed a real connection with him. This spiritualized form of unity with Christ as emblemized in the presence of the Lord at the feast, set the stage for the unity of the *ecclesia* as emblemized in the body.⁵⁶ As noted by Mazza,

'Body of Christ' when applied to the Church, is no longer a mere sociological fact nor a literary image, but a reality that has a precise ontological density, namely that the mystery of the body of Christ is realized in the Church. In the eucharistic [*sic*] liturgy, unity becomes a reality because the faithful share in the one bread which in turn is a communion in the body of Christ.⁵⁷

The bread, as a unified loaf, is broken into pieces for distribution. While the breaking of the bread recalls the sacrifice of Christ as his body was broken on the cross for the sins of his followers, the initial unity of the bread reminds believers of their organic connection both to Christ and to other members of his body as they mutually partake.⁵⁸ Moreover, the Eucharist embodied the exhortation of the Jerusalem Council to include Jews and Gentiles in the *ecclesia* (Acts 15:27–31). It represented the striving of Paul to eliminate distinction between Jew and Gentile, slaves and free (1 Cor. 12:13; cf. Gal 3:28).⁵⁹ Believers recognized each other with the greeting of a holy kiss and the labels 'brother' and 'sister' as they celebrated the Lord's Supper.⁶⁰ The bond of unity within the *ecclesia* grows out of the *κοινωνία* (fellowship, 1 Cor. 1:9) reflected in the Eucharist.⁶¹ The *ecclesia* was intended to be unified as one, functioning seamlessly as a body without competition among parts (1 Cor. 12:12–14).

56 See on this topic Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering*, 116.

57 Enrico Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist: The Origin of the Rite and the Development of its Interpretation* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 84.

58 A.J.B. Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1952), 67–70.

59 Léon-Dufour, *Sharing the Eucharistic Bread*, 218.

60 Otto Knoch, "Do This in Remembrance of Me!" (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:24–25): The Celebration of the Eucharist in the Primitive Christian Communities," in *One Loaf, One Cup: Ecumenical Studies of 1 Cor. 11 and Other Eucharistic Texts*, ed. Ben F. Meyer (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1993), 10.

61 "Paul is saying that we are incorporated into the individual body of the risen Jesus so that a constitutive and permanent bond unites us to it and makes us dependent on it. The

Unity was derived from the shared belief that all persons equally needed God's grace. Eucharist emblemized this shared belief. Paul found the Corinthian *ecclesia* in a situation where the norms of the group competed against the beliefs of the group.⁶² The Eucharistic ritual had the ability to perpetuate group identity, but this capacity was being set aside by the congregation. Paul took this very seriously and encouraged revisions in the dining ritual such that the beliefs of the *ecclesia* might be adequately portrayed and perpetuated via the ritual.

2.3 *Purity: Eucharist as Cleanser from Idolatry*

The Eucharistic teaching in 1 Corinthians 10 was intended to counter a very specific concern in the Corinthian context, that of idolatrous dining. Paul's teaching on the Lord's Supper was his answer to the temptation of idolatry.⁶³ He appealed to the Lord's Supper because the ritual possessed an ability to define the *ecclesia* in contradistinction to the idolatrous groups which surrounded the Corinthians, and to which some had previously belonged. Paul closely connects the Eucharist to the wilderness wanderings of Israel, and in so doing, approximates the *ecclesia* with Israel. He then applies the old covenant theme of idolatry avoidance to the *ecclesia*. The strong connection between idolatry avoidance and the Eucharist ritual is a means by which the worship of Christ-followers is distinguished from pagan religious cults. This is a strategic clarification in the Corinthian context where some continuation of Roman civic identities might be allowed as long as it did not contradict or confuse outsiders regarding the believers' in-Christ identity (cf. 1 Cor. 6:18, flee immorality and 1 Cor. 10:14, flee idolatry).

The Eucharistic teaching in 1 Corinthians 10 has two interrelated sections. First, the *ecclesia* is compared to Israel in the wilderness, with the admonition against idolatry applied to the *ecclesia*. Second, the temptation to dine in honor of pagan deities in Corinth is contrasted with the Lord's Supper. Eucharistic imagery is woven throughout. In the wilderness, the Israelites ate spiritual food

thought which Paul is conveying is the same as that conveyed by *koinonia* when used in the intensified sense it has in 1 Cor 10; the only difference is that attention here is on the effect of the *koinonia* for the entire community of believers. The ecclesial body of Christ, which has been established by baptism, continues to be shaped and to receive life through the eucharistic meal and this in a privileged way." Léon-Dufour, *Sharing the Eucharistic Bread*, 213.

62 Note analysis from Bar-Tal regarding the ability to differentiate between group norms and group beliefs: Bar-Tal, "Group Beliefs as an Expression of Social Identity," 96–101.

63 Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 476; Wendell L. Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 193.

and drank spiritual drink (1 Cor. 10:3–4). Presumably, these references relate to the manna offered up daily by the Lord (Exodus 16:1–7) and the water provided from the rock at Horeb (Exodus 17:1–7). Even though the Israelites had access to a divinely provided food, they were not immune from the temptation and consequences of idolatry. Paul cautions the Corinthians, making them aware that the divine provision of grace does not mean they are incapable of idolatrous worship. Just such a temptation was present in the invitation to dine in honor of pagan deities. Paul seems to distinguish eating meat sacrificed to idols from partaking in a feast to honor a specific deity. Paul draws a strong contrast between the pagan idol feasts and the Lord's Supper, describing them as competing entities.

Taken as a Eucharistic passage, 1 Corinthians 5:6–8 perpetuates the theme of ritual purity in several ways. Paul appeals to the image of leaven removal as a metaphor for purity within the *ecclesia*. It is not necessarily clear that Paul had idolatry specifically in mind here. He may have been referring to the polluting influence of the man's immorality on the remainder of the *ecclesia*. Conversely, the leaven might also be the arrogance of the *ecclesia* in endorsing the man's immorality. Or, the two may be one and the same. Regardless of whether the leaven imagery is a direct reference to idolatry or a specific sin, the concept of purity from sin is perpetuated through the Eucharist. The close connection between idolatry and sexual immorality should be noted. Other Pauline references demonstrate an integration of the two: Romans 1:22–24 where the result of worshipping an image of the true God was impurity and Galatians 5:19–21 where immorality, impurity and sensuality are listed just prior to idolatry in the itemization of the deeds of the flesh. Paul addresses both in tandem in 1 Corinthians 10:7. Idolatry led to playing, with the etymological implication of immorality. Additionally, the parallelism of 1 Corinthians 6:18 (flee immorality) and 10:14 (flee idolatry) demonstrates just how closely these concepts are linked in Pauline conceptualization. The union of the *ecclesia* with Christ is proclaimed in both chapters as well. In 1 Corinthians 6:15, 17, the member is joined to Christ spiritually via purity, and in 1 Corinthians 10:16, the member is in fellowship with Christ spiritually via Eucharist. The admonition to glorify God is included in both, 1 Corinthians 6:20 (glorify in purity, thus avoiding immorality) and 1 Corinthians 10:31 (glorify in dining, thus avoiding idolatry). In both chapters, Paul also admits that the action itself is not inherently sinful, but that it is the misuse which presents a temptation. In 1 Corinthians 6:12 conjugal fidelity is lawful but intimacy with a prostitute is not, and in 1 Corinthians 10:23 eating is lawful and necessary but idolatrous feasting is not.⁶⁴ Inasmuch as 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 is a confrontation of πορνεία

64 Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 474.

(of a different variety than that confronted in 1 Corinthians 6:12–20 but immorality all the same), the connections made between Eucharist as an alternative to idolatrous dining in 1 Corinthians 10 can be applied to the situation of the immoral man. Paul employs the Eucharistic ritual within the *ecclesia* to counter the non-normative, idolatrous behavior of the immoral man.

Within the social identity approach, Steve Hinkle and R.J. Brown have argued for the identity-differentiation hypothesis,⁶⁵ which documents a correlation between the strength of ingroup categorization and the degree of differentiation perceived with the outgroup. Committed ingroup members perceive a higher degree of differentiation between the ingroup and outgroup. Paul is calling the Corinthian believers into deeper levels of ingroup commitment. The Eucharist is intended to deepen vertical commitment to Christ and to deepen interpersonal bonds within the *ecclesia*. As these goals are accomplished, the individuals come to greater identity clarity. This is especially the case for pagan converts in Corinth, who experienced confusion as to when their Roman civic identity and when their in-Christ identities should prevail. This is evidenced in the matter of lawsuits, prostitutes and meat sacrificed to idols. Paul suggests a complex negotiation of identity for the Corinthians. They are to maintain meaningful contact in relationships which preceded identification with Christ, inclusive of business partners, patrons and spouses. These relationships are to be maintained even if such persons are practicing idolatrous forms of paganism. Yet, the manner in which the Christ-follower interacts should always maintain strong differentiation between the *ecclesia* as an ingroup and the pagans as an outgroup. It is the maintenance of this differentiation which makes the continuation of relationship possible. Paul uses the Eucharist to bring ingroup definition in such a manner that the differentiation is heightened. The celebration of the Lord's Supper was a place where the believer was ritually reminded that he did not believe in idols and that he was not a pagan. Such strengthening of commitment created space for engagement with the pagan. Since witness through distinction was a driving principle for Paul's instruction to the Corinthians, the ritual reiteration of the atonement through the Lord's Supper had performative value for the *ecclesia* in accomplishing its purpose. This also explains why Paul chose this ritual as the context for mediating the expulsion of the immoral man.

65 Hinkle and Brown, "Intergroup Differentiation and Social Identity," 48–70. See also clarifications and development of the hypothesis in Lalonde, "Testing the Social Identity-Intergroup Differentiation Hypothesis," 611–30. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964–1976).

3 Sympotic Exclusion in 1 Corinthians 5:6–8

Given the importance of the Eucharistic meal to the identity of the *ecclesia*, it is logical that Paul would have utilized this context to mediate and enforce the derogation of the immoral man. Commensality is mentioned twice within 1 Corinthians 5:1–13. In 1 Corinthians 5:11, Paul prohibits eating with the immoral man once he had been removed from the congregation. This appeals to the sense of group boundedness as well as the importance of dining for group definition. In 1 Corinthians 5:6–8, Paul employs the symbolic power of the Passover meal to convey boundaries for the *ecclesia*.

Paul makes explicit reference to the Passover meal, though this ought to be understood as his descriptor of the Lord's Supper in the Corinthian context. Some justification for this proposal to include 1 Corinthians 5:6–8 alongside recognized Eucharistic references in 1 Corinthians 10:1–17 and 11:17–34 is warranted. Many scholars leave the potential connection unmentioned in their analysis.⁶⁶ Others note the possibility of a Eucharistic connection, though without advocating for its probability.⁶⁷ Of course, it should be observed that only a limited set of scholars have discounted the possibility of such a connection. And, when this is the case, typically there is very little explanation for the dismissal.⁶⁸ Those approaching the text from an exegetical point of view within the field of biblical studies advocate sparingly for the possibility of a Eucharistic reference.⁶⁹ On the other hand, liturgists and systematic theologians, frequently assume such a connection.⁷⁰

66 Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 6th ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007); Taylor, *1 Corinthians*; Garland, *1 Corinthians*; Alan F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2004); Keener, *1–2 Corinthians*; Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*; Murphy-O'Connor, *1 Corinthians*; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*.

67 Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 214–15; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 217–19; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 241–42; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 86; Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 129–30; May, *The Body for the Lord*, 70.

68 Perkins, *First Corinthians*, 93; Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 284; Conzelmann, MacRae, and Leitch, *1 Corinthians*, 98–99.

69 Héring, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians*, 36–37; John J. Lias, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1897), 68; Gardner, *1 Corinthians*, 234; Orr and Walther, *1 Corinthians*, 186–92; Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther*, 73.

70 Rodrigo J. Morales, "A Liturgical Conversation of the Imagination: Worship and Ethics in 1 Corinthians," in *Liturgy and Empire: Faith in Exile and Political Theology*, Letter & Spirit 5 (Steubenville: St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology, 2009), 109; James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 216–17; N.T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God 4 (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2013),

Three lines of argumentation in favor of a Eucharistic appeal in 1 Corinthians 5:6–8 can be generally discerned. First, the synoptic traditions make a firm connection between the Passover and the Lord's Supper by placing the first Eucharistic celebration in the context of the Seder meal. Second, the symbolism of expiation and purity exists in both the Passover and the Lord's Supper, such that the conformity of themes links the two commensal rituals. Third, the concepts of immorality, judgment and dining presented in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 are intricately woven into the Pauline discourses on Eucharist in 1 Corinthians 10:1–17 and 11:17–34. The seamless overlap of these three concepts in Eucharistic passages suggests that Paul intended a Eucharistic reference in his instructions regarding the immoral man.

3.1 *Synoptic Tradition*

The synoptic traditions explicitly state that the Lord's Supper was presented within the context of the Passover meal (Matt. 26:17–18; Mark 14:1, 12; Luke 22:7, 15). The gospel of John also emphasizes the relationship of the Passover to the crucifixion, although the timing of the Seder appears to differ from that of the synoptic traditions. John indicates that the day of preparation for the Passover was on the Thursday of Passion Week and that Jesus was crucified on the same day that the Passover lambs were slaughtered in the temple (John 13:1, 18:28, 19:14). Various approaches have been taken to this differentiation, ranging from a willingness to accept divergent accounts to explanations of how the Passover meal might have been celebrated over the course of two nights in Jesus' time.⁷¹ It is beyond the scope of this work to propose a specific resolution on the matter.⁷² It can be accurately observed, though, that all gospel accounts closely

1347; Gordon P. Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers: The Significance of the Intercessory Prayer Passages in the Letters of St Paul*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 24 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 143–47; Dom G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Glasgow: The University Press, 1947), 273–74; Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, trans. Norman Perrin (London: SCM Press, 1990), 56–62; James M. Hamilton Jr., "The Lord's Supper in Paul: An Identity Forming Proclamation of the Gospel," in *The Lord's Supper: Remembering and Proclaiming Christ until He Comes*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Matthew R. Crawford, *NAC Studies in Bible & Theology* 10 (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 95–96.

71 Higgins, *The Lord's Supper in the New Testament*, 64–65. The Pauline Eucharistic references are not necessarily chronologically appraised in the sense that the gospel accounts are; however, Higgins has argued that the association of Jesus with the first fruits (1 Cor. 15:22) which was celebrated on 16 Nissan, would mean that Jesus was crucified on 14 Nissan, the day of the Passover. This perspective, if accurate, would align Paul with the Johannine account.

72 See helpful synopsis and documentation of sources on the matter in Robin Routledge, "Passover and Last Supper," *Tyndale Bulletin* 53, no. 2 (2002): 205. Note also the similar

link the events of Passover to the redemptive significance of the crucifixion.⁷³ While the Synoptic Gospels do so through emphasis on the reinterpreted symbolism of the Passover meal, the Johannine tradition does so via the direct correlation of Jesus to the Passover lamb (cf. John 1:29; Rev. 5:6–14). The Passover consisted of both a sacrifice and a meal.⁷⁴

While the gospel traditions vary in their emphasis on meal over sacrifice or vice versa, the two are not necessarily separable in the Jewish concept of the feast. Even if the meal which Jesus shared with his disciples was not a standardly timed Passover celebration, it featured prominent attributes of the Passover feast as it would have been commemorated in a Jewish household prior to the destruction of the temple in AD 70.⁷⁵ Bread and wine were both important parts of the Seder meal. The use of unleavened bread as representative of the haste with which the Israelites exited Egypt harkens back to Exodus 12:14–20, 39. By the first century AD, it is probable that four cups of wine were served during the Seder feast.⁷⁶ Perhaps the most surprising omission in the synoptic descriptions is the herbs and roasted lamb, both of which were a prominent component of the Passover meal in that time period. Subsequent to the destruction of the temple, without the ability to slaughter a lamb in Jerusalem, the unleavened bread became the primary symbol of redemption in the meal. Even before the demise of the temple necessitated it, the unleavened bread and the lamb were closely associated by celebrants outside of Jerusalem, who utilized the unleavened bread as the central symbolic component in the absence of a lamb.⁷⁷ Jesus likely opted to focus on the bread as the primary symbol in light of the forthcoming cessation of temple cult practices and the finality of his sacrifice for the sake of redemption (cf. Heb. 10:1–10). The Passover also included ceremonial washing, which is likely the phase of the meal where Jesus washed the disciples' feet (John 13:4–10), offering a

conclusion regarding effect of the timing of the Passover in the gospels on interpretation of Passover imagery in 1 Corinthians 5:6–8 in Knoch, "Do This in Remembrance of Me!" (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:24–25)," 6.

73 Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 289.

74 E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 132–38. Paul only mentions the sacrifice in 1 Corinthians 5:6–8, in one sense. On the other hand, it should not be overlooked that that paschal lamb was consumed as a part of the meal, even though Jesus did not incorporate the lamb as a part of the ongoing symbolic ritual in the Lord's Supper. It might also be said that the reference to unleavened bread has an allusion to the feast. See Morales, "A Liturgical Conversation of the Imagination," 109.

75 Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 81–82.

76 *Pesah*. 10:1, 37b–c.

77 Routledge, "Passover and Last Supper," 216.

reinterpretation of the symbolism just as he did with the bread and the wine.⁷⁸ In 1 Corinthians, Paul appealed to an established tradition regarding the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:23; cf. 1 Cor. 15:3), one which he had received at an earlier point in his spiritual journey.⁷⁹ Paul had already instructed the believers in Corinth regarding the celebration of the Lord's Supper, likely on his second missionary journey when he first visited Corinth.⁸⁰ Thus the instructions Paul had previously provided were undoubtedly rooted in the perspective which is related in the gospels, particularly the connection of the commemoration of the Lord's Supper with the Passover symbolism. Paul does not make the connection between the two explicit because the association is assumed, as a part of the previous instruction given to the Corinthians regarding the meal.⁸¹

3.2 *Expiation and Purity*

The remarkable similarity of symbolism, especially related to the notion of expiation for sin and ritual purity and found simultaneously in the Passover and the Lord's Supper, argues for a more explicit connection between the two than is sometimes accorded. The fact that both are cultic meals makes this association even clearer. The Passover lamb was not an atoning sacrifice in the initial presentation; however, the association of atonement with the paschal lamb was already emerging by the time of Ezekiel 45:18–22.⁸² Dunn views this correlation as likely settled by the time of Paul, such that the paschal reference of 1 Corinthians 5:6–8 is a clear appeal to the Lord's Supper where the imagery of atonement intersects with the imagery of the Passover.⁸³ Schnabel highlights this correlation between Passover and atonement, connecting this to the eschatological expectation of the Christian faith:

78 Routledge, "Passover and Last Supper," 211–12.

79 William R. Farmer, "Peter and Paul, and the Tradition Concerning 'The Lord's Supper' in 1 Cor 11:23–26," in Meyer, *One Loaf, One Cup*, 35–46. William R. Farmer argues that the visit to Jerusalem referenced in Galatians 1:18 was for the purpose of understanding the early traditions of the *ecclesia*. He concludes that the discussions had by Peter and Paul on this visit were not regarding the gospel itself but related to the traditions of the *ecclesia*. The Lord's Supper may have been a topic of conversation between Peter and Paul, since Peter was present with the Lord on the night in which he instituted the practice.

80 Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist*, 22–24.

81 Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 220–25. Jeremias accentuates the argument by noting that the imagery of flesh and blood relates to a sacrifice, that Jesus was connecting the Paschal sacrifice with himself. Jeremias then argues that the Corinthians received this pre-Pauline tradition as a matter of widespread dissemination of the concept, then reaffirmed by Paul. Cf. Zeller, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 205–6.

82 Garland, 1 *Corinthians*, 180; Liu, *Temple Purity in 1–2 Corinthians*, 127. See also 2 Chronicles 29–30 where Hezekiah purified the temple through the paschal sacrifice.

83 Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 216–17.

Paulus sieht im Passa, das Israel an den Exodus erinnerte, einen *Typos* (Vor-Bild) der göttlichen Befreiungstat, die im Kreuzestod Jesu Christi stattgefunden hat. Der Befreiung Israels aus der Sklaverei entspricht bei Paulus die Befreiung aus der Sklaverei der Sünde. Der Tod Jesu hat befreiende, erlösende, Sünden sühnende Kraft. In der atl. und jüdischen Tradition hatte zwar das übliche Passaopfer keine sühnende Wirkung, diese ist aber im Blick auf das Blut der eschlachteten Passalämmer beim Auszug aus Ägypten sowie im Blick auf die in der Endzeit geopfert Lämmer betont (Ez 45,18–22).⁸⁴

The atonement theme is closely connected to the purity theme, which Paul appeals to in the leaven analogy. As noted by Liu,

Indeed, the establishment of the purity boundary due to Jesus as the Passover lamb is analogous to the purification of Israel during the Passover along with the slaughtered Lamb as the atoning sacrifice. The sacrifice of animals as a means of purification has been discussed in Second Temple literature. To celebrate the new Passover with the Corinthians inaugurated by Jesus' death, Paul was right to require them to be holy because Jesus as the Passover lamb is the alternative to animals and entails the purification of the temple-community.⁸⁵

The Eucharist imagery conveys both the sacrifice of Christ on behalf of believers and the resultant effects of that redemption. The conflation of these two themes preceded Pauline authorship of the first letter to the Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians 5:7, Paul refers to Christ as a sacrifice, and in 1 Corinthians 11:26, Paul indicates that Eucharist is a proclamation of the Lord's death. The interweaving of these themes indicates an assumption on the part of Paul that his paschal reference in 1 Corinthians 5:7 would be understood in light of a Eucharistic context.⁸⁶ Joachim Jeremias maintained that Paul referenced an

84 [Paul sees in the Passover, which reminded Israel of the Exodus, a *typos* (archetype) of the divine act of liberation that took place in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. For Paul, Israel's liberation from slavery corresponds to liberation from the slavery of sin. The death of Jesus has liberating, redeeming, sin-atoning power. In the Old Testament and Jewish tradition, the usual Passover sacrifice did not have an atoning effect, but this is emphasized in view of the blood of the slaughtered Passover lambs during the exodus from Egypt and in view of the lambs sacrificed in the last days (Ez. 45:18–22).] Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, 289.

85 Liu, *Temple Purity in 1–2 Corinthians*, 135.

86 Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 273–74.

early Christian *haggadah* in 1 Corinthians 5:8 and that he “presupposes as self-evident the familiarity of the Corinthians community with this comparison.”⁸⁷

3.3 *Immorality, Judgment and Dining*

Paul surfaces three interrelated concepts (immorality, judgment and dining) in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13. The immediate passage, of course, relates to an incestuous man whose behavior is labeled as *πορνεία*. The surrounding context deals with the avoidance of prostitution (1 Cor. 6:12–20) as well as fidelity in marriage (1 Cor. 7:1–5) and chastity in singleness (1 Cor. 7:8–9). Moreover, Paul addresses the matter of unbelievers who are immoral, yet still in need of relational witness from Christ-followers (1 Cor. 5:9). The theme of judgment interrelates with immorality in that Paul instructs the *ecclesia* to mediate (1 Cor. 5:3–4) and replicate (1 Cor. 5:12) his own judgment toward the immoral man. It is also clear that Paul functions with divine sanction in his pronouncement of removal for the man.⁸⁸ The refusal to eat with the immoral man is a means of enforcing the expulsion, and communicating to a wider audience that this man has behaved dishonorably (1 Cor. 5:11).

Such judgment for immorality intersects with dining customs in 1 Corinthians 10 as well. Paul twice employs the verb *πορνεύω* in 1 Corinthians 10:8 to describe the unfaithfulness of the Israelites to YHWH. The reference to 23,000 makes it likely that Paul has in mind the incident recorded in Numbers 25:1–9 where the Israelites gave themselves to the prophet Baal. The reference to immorality has a double entendre related to spiritual idolatry as well as actual illicit sexual activity on the part of the Israelites.⁸⁹ Paul challenges the Corinthians to put aside both idolatry and sexual immorality which they would have participated in formerly as pagans in the local expressions of the cults of Aphrodite, Dionysus/Bacchus, Apollo, Isis/Sarapis and Poseidon.⁹⁰

87 Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 222–23. Jeremias further notes how widespread the paschal comparison is in the New Testament as evidence of a pre-Pauline Passover *haggadah* (1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 5:6–12, 12:11; John 1:29, 36, 19:36; cf. 1 Corinthians 10:14–21).

88 The concept of divine sanction is based primarily on the phrase *σὺν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ* (with the power of our Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. 5:4b), as I argue elsewhere that the phrase *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ* (in the name of our Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. 5:3) modifies the participle *κατεργασάμενον*, supporting the idea that the immoral man felt that his behavior was justified by divine sanction as well.

89 Related to the double meaning of *πορνεύω*, see G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 249–50. The text itself bears out the association of immorality to idolatry (cf. 1 Cor. 10:7).

90 Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 738–39. Thiselton offers an explication of the opportunity for immorality in the pagan cults of Roman Corinth. Of course, the

The actions of Christ-followers are evaluated carefully by the Lord, who was not well-pleased (1 Cor. 10:5). The passage contains other allusions to judgment as well. Paul's eschatological reference to the ends of the ages (1 Cor. 10:11) connotes future judgment related to choices in this life. The idea of standing and falling related to overconfidence (1 Cor. 10:12) also assumes a divine standard which is applied to human choices. Paul notes that the Lord can be provoked to jealousy (1 Cor. 10:22) and his concluding injunction to eat or drink to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31) also assumes that a divine standard exists by which Christ-followers are evaluated.⁹¹ Paul's discussion of immorality and judgment is integrally linked to the idea of dining. The apostle weaves together the participation in pagan temple dining with the ritual meal of the Lord's Supper. In order to answer the question of whether Christ-followers can eat meat sacrificed to idols, Paul compares a sacrifice to a demon with the sacramental partaking of the Lord's Supper. Dining in honor of both is impossible (1 Cor. 10:21). It should be noted that while 1 Corinthians 10:1–4 does not make explicit references to the Passover, it does contextualize the entire discussion within the wilderness wanderings. The reference to the passing through the sea (1 Cor. 10:1) could potentially be associated with the Passover in that the meal commemorates the quick, but more importantly, the divinely blessed departure from Egypt. The parting of the water was an expression of miraculous protection and deliverance from certain death, just as the paschal lamb's blood on the doorpost shielded the Israelites from the angel of death.

In 1 Corinthians 11, we also find this intricate intertwining of the concepts of immorality, judgment and dining. While immorality is not explicitly referenced in 1 Corinthians 11 as it is in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 and 1 Corinthians 10,⁹² we nonetheless find parallel themes and exhortations. Paul's command to examine oneself prior to partaking in the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:28) is reminiscent of his assertion that believers should take heed (1 Cor. 10:12).⁹³ And just as the Corinthians are forewarned by the Israelites who experienced the

qualification is offered that Aphrodite's cultic prostitutes likely belonged to the Greek era but that immorality abounded in most of the expressions of pagan cultic worship to one degree or another.

91 The only use of the word *κρίνω* in the chapter comes in 1 Corinthians 10:15 where Paul invites the Corinthians to evaluate his exhortation to them. Nonetheless, this emphasizes the ethos of the entire passage. God evaluates Christ-followers in terms of his divine standards, and believers evaluate others in relation to their conformance to the Lord's standards.

92 It is not necessarily implied that partaking in an unworthy manner (*ἀναξίως*, 1 Cor. 11:27) involves immorality *per se*.

93 In point of fact, *δοκέω* (1 Cor. 10:12) is from similar semantic domain as *δοκιμάζω* (1 Cor. 11:28).

effects of judgment (καταστρώννυμι, 1 Cor. 10:5 / πίπτω, 1 Cor. 10:8 / ἀπόλλυμαι, 1 Cor. 10:9–10), the violators at the Lord's table are subject to death (χοιμάομαι,⁹⁴ 1 Cor. 11:30), not to mention weakness and illness. Believers must judge themselves rightly (1 Cor. 11:29), or they will be subject to the judgment of the *ecclesia* (1 Cor. 11:31). As in the case of the immoral man, the judgment of the *ecclesia* is a form of accountability which is intended to bring reform. When a wayward believer is judged by the *ecclesia*, the Lord instructs (παιδεύω, 1 Cor. 11:32) him.⁹⁵ It is implied that this instruction is in contrast to the full weight of divine judgment which might have been levied.⁹⁶ Of course, all of this judgment of sin comes in the context of dining. The verb ἐσθίω is found throughout.⁹⁷

Further parallels between 1 Corinthians 5, 10 and 11 might be adduced, nevertheless, the general observation is herein made. Paul seamlessly overlaps the themes of immorality, judgment and dining in these passages. In both 1 Corinthians 5 and 10, there are significant Passover/wilderness wandering themes. In 1 Corinthians 10 and 11, there are significant discussions of the Lord's Supper. Thus, the question regarding which dining contexts are referenced in Paul's admonition not to eat with the immoral man in 1 Corinthians 5:11 is resolved in light of the strong reference to the Lord's Supper in the Passover references.⁹⁸

94 A cognate of χοιμάομαι is used in the sense of death at multiple places (1 Cor. 7:39, 11:30, 15:6, 18, 20, 51).

95 Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, 376. Schrage compares the discipline which the congregation brings upon the immoral man through expulsion to the discipline the Lord brings upon the violators at the Lord's Supper. In both cases, physical death preempts more severe consequence of ultimate condemnation.

96 See 2 Corinthians 6:9 where instruction is contrasted with death: ζῶμεν, ὡς παιδεύόμενοι καὶ μὴ θανατούμενοι, (we live; as punished yet not put to death, 2 Cor. 6:9).

97 1 Corinthians 11:20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34.

98 Although from a social identity perspective, it might also be observed that avoiding other social contexts with the man could also prevent confusion as to whether the immoral man was representative of the *ecclesia*. The cultic meal was an occasion which would have clearly identified the man with the *ecclesia*, thus exclusion from the Lord's Supper was understood to reflect the man's lack of conformance to the *ecclesia's* (probably viewed as an association) standard of conduct. Other dining occasions might also have appropriately been excluded, depending on their social function. Lang, *Die Briefe an die Korinther*, 75. This does surface the question of whether the man should have been treated as an outsider once he had been removed from the *ecclesia*. Since Paul encouraged discourse with outsiders, would exclusion of the man open up more possibilities for interaction? In an attempt to resolve such tension, Daniel Ho Sin-pan suggests in his analysis of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 that sinning brothers comprised a third category altogether, being neither insider nor outsider. Ho, *Paul and the Creation of a Counter-Cultural Community*, 52–53. It seems better to resolve this matter by understanding the refusal to eat with the man as a prohibition against allowing the man to partake of the Lord's Supper. This avoids

By referencing the Lord's Supper through explicit Passover allusions in 1 Corinthians 5:6–8, Paul underscores the broader assertion that Eucharist was a ritualistic entity by which the boundaries of the *ecclesia* were both enforced and inculcated. The exclusive nature of the Passover meal is paradigmatic for the Eucharistic ritual, which replaces the Passover ritual under the new covenant. The Passover meal was wholly inaccessible to the non-Jew. It was an insider practice only, as was the Eucharist. The ritual could only be undertaken by an insider who affirmed the meaning of the ritual through its performance. Outsiders could witness the ritual, but without participating. Paul sees a benefit to the entire *ecclesia* in banning the immoral man from partaking of the Eucharist. In the same manner that the ritual enforces and inculcates boundaries constructively for the *ecclesia*, the removal of the man from the Eucharist honors the symbolism of the ritual. He is now an outsider as a result of his sinful choices and needs to be excluded from the table so that the ritual will continue to accomplish its group-forming purpose.⁹⁹

3.4 *The Lord's Supper as Sympotic Meal*

The *ecclesia* adopted the sympotic format of the surrounding culture and thus benefitted from the above mentioned group-forming capacities of the festive meal by ritualizing it within the *ecclesia*. As a sympotic meal, relationships were forged through conviviality. Paul associated the Eucharistic meal with the term *κοινωνία* (sharing, 1 Cor. 10:16). The word conveys a shared experience which leads to closeness between individuals.¹⁰⁰ When Christ-followers dined in commemoration of the Lord's Supper, they also forged a depth of relationship around the table which far exceeded the casual acquaintance of other contexts. As Dennis E. Smith notes, the community meal possessed “unparalleled power to define social boundaries and create social bonding.”¹⁰¹ Jesus demonstrated the depth of relationship possible with his disciples when he reclined with them at the Last Supper. Klinghardt argues that the social requirement of *κοινωνία* had become almost exclusively expressed in the

the confusion of a liminal ‘third group’ in regard to the social identity of believers and unbelievers. By disallowing table fellowship at the Lord's Supper, the meal is protected against unbelievers and the social status of the man is clear to other outsiders. While Paul encourages interaction with unbeliever, he does not promote the open invitation of unbeliever to the cultic meal. In this way, the treatment of the immoral man is consistent with the approach of the *ecclesia* to other unbelievers.

99 Finney, *Honour and Conflict in the Ancient World*, 118.

100 W.A. Sebothoma, “KOINONIA in 1 Corinthians 10:16,” *Neotestamentica* 24, no. 1 (1990): 63–64.

101 Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 184.

sympotic meal by Roman times.¹⁰² Thus, the order of the banquet, the distribution of food, the determination of who led the event and many other aspects were all carefully arranged so as to preserve a sense of *κοινωνία*. Paul's aspirational desire for *κοινωνία* within the *ecclesia* makes the social disparity at the Lord's Supper in Corinth painfully frustrating for the apostle. The opportunity for relationship formation at a meal had been set asunder by the Corinthian method of convening the meal. Paul reminds them that the ritual meal has the ability to define the group and draw individuals together in one accord.

The Lord's Supper in Corinth was situated within a symposium-like meal where drinks and discussion followed the main course.¹⁰³ The *δεῖπνον-συνπόσιον* dining format is hinted at in 1 Corinthians 11:25 where the words of institution read *τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπνήσαι* (the cup after supper, 1 Cor. 11:25).¹⁰⁴ Yet another reference to this form of dining is found in 1 Corinthians 10:16 with the phrase *τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας* (the cup of blessing, 1 Cor. 10:16). In typical Roman dining custom, a benediction was made over the wine prior to the commencement of the sympotic portion of the meal.¹⁰⁵ In the context of the Christian symposium, teaching occurred such that members of the *ecclesia* had an opportunity to coalesce in agreement on key doctrines of the faith. The Eucharist was not only a ritual proclamation of key tenets of the cult (1 Cor. 11:26)¹⁰⁶ but also an opportunity to formulate the ideological commitments of the group.¹⁰⁷ Early formulations of the Christ-follower movement portrayed in Acts give evidence of teaching being paired with the breaking of bread: *Ἦσαν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ ... τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου* (They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and ... to the breaking of bread, Acts 2:42). The same practice is evident later in Paul's ministry in Troas (Acts 20:6–12) where the apostle's instruction

102 Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft*, 155–56.

103 Eugene LaVerdiere, *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 30–31.

104 Of course, these words reflect a tradition which describes the initial Lord's Supper in Jerusalem; however, given that the Corinthian Christ-followers had removed the Lord's Supper from a format that was Passover-like into a Greco-Roman format, they were likely hearing the words of institution in terms of their own cultural situation. At the very least, they had contextualized into Roman culture what they knew to be true of the Jewish form.

105 Smith and Taussig, *Mary Tables*, 26.

106 Note the use of *καταγγέλλετε* here, but also in 1 Corinthians 2:1, 9:14 where the context is a compelling explanation of a specific doctrine. Applying this meaning from 2:1 and 9:14 in 1 Corinthians 11:26, we can certainly imagine the formative capacity of the symposium on the *ecclesia* in Corinth.

107 Léon-Dufour, *Sharing the Eucharistic Bread*, 36.

is twice linked with the breaking of bread.¹⁰⁸ In distinction to the secular concepts of a symposium, where free dialogue reigned, there seems to be a didactic component to the gatherings of the *ecclesia*. This aspect of the dining experience contributed even further to the identity-shaping capacity of the Eucharistic meal.¹⁰⁹

We have no direct evidence that invitations were issued for the Lord's Supper, although the early gatherings of believers may have been at the invitation of those hosting the banquet at their homes. G.H.R. Horsley and Stephen Llewelyn note the papyrus evidence of invitations for banquets of Sarapis and compare Paul's similar vocabulary to the invitations issued. Such invitations would have been customary both for private meals at a home as well as meals of a religious character.¹¹⁰ We do not necessarily have an indication in the biblical text that those coming later to the Corinthian meal had self-selected themselves, even though this has been the assumption on the part of many. Nonetheless, baptism served as a status-qualifying experience for participation in the Lord's Supper. In much the same way as initiation rituals with mystery cults resulted in the opportunity to dine together with other initiates, the completion of the initiation requirements for the *ecclesia* possessed similar social implication as an invitation did to typical banqueting practices.¹¹¹ The tradition of baptism as a preceding requirement for the Eucharist is found as early as the *Didache*.¹¹² The social habit of banquet invitation would have served as a template for Romans in regard to how the Lord's Supper functioned socially.

Stratification in festive dining contributed to identity formation within the *ecclesia* as well. Whereas many Roman associations attracted a particular segment of the population, the *ecclesia* included members from all strata

108 Smith and Taussig, *Many Tables*, 28. Jesus is also portrayed as teaching over meals, apart from the Last Supper. For instance, Luke 14:1–24 depicts a meal on the Sabbath where Jesus proposes a discussion with the scribes and Pharisees regarding Sabbath regulations. He then uses then context of a meal to challenge the fellow diners' conceptualization of kinship in relation to the kingdom.

109 Taussig, *In the Beginning was the Meal*, 36–40.

110 G.H.R. Horsley and Stephen Llewelyn, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1976*, 1 (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 5–9.

111 Maxwell E. Johnson, *Praying and Believing in Early Christianity: The Interplay between Christian Worship and Doctrine* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2013), 109.

112 *Didache*, 9.5a. “μηδεις δε φαγέτω μηδε πιέτω από της εύχαριστίας υμών, άλλ' οι βαπτισθέντες εις ὄνομα κυρίου.” Bart D. Ehrman, trans., *The Apostolic Fathers, Volume 1: 1 Clement. 11 Clement. Ignatius. Polycarp. Didache.*, Loeb Classical Library 24 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 431. “But let no one eat or drink from your thanksgiving meal unless they have been baptized in the name of the Lord.”

of society. Thus, the questions of how to engage in the dining context would have been complex, to be sure. The process of negotiating status, and how that status should be appropriately reflected in the seating and serving of guests, required the *ecclesia* to navigate questions of social identity relevant to ingroup boundaries. Paul describes the outcomes of the factions as δόκιμος (honored, 1 Cor. 11:19) and φανερός (well-known or visible, 1 Cor. 11:19). Such terms could allude to the practice of proximate seating related to social status in the *ecclesia*. Paul responds to this, arguing that the stratification fails to picture his egalitarian vision for the *ecclesia*. In this regard, the revisioning of seating to avoid preference of high status individuals allowed the Eucharistic meal to create a unique identity, uncommon to other Roman contexts.

Early Christ-followers also invoked Christ as deity at the libation phase of the sympotic meal. Rather than offering a libation to a Roman god or goddess, they used the occasion to commemorate Christ's shedding of his blood. As noted by Taussig,

Close analysis of the wide range of gods to whom the libation could be dedicated made clear that various (relatively new) identities were being negotiated as different meals focused on or left open to whom the cup would be raised. As such, the choice of which god should be honored in the libation helped those at the meal practice their own emerging social loyalties. That some associations came to raise the cup only to a certain god helped them develop a certain social identity in the confusing Hellenistic polyglot.¹¹³

Rather than sing a bawdy song or a paeon to another god, Christocentric hymns were sung. Paul's reference to the cup of blessing is likely his description of this libation practice of the *ecclesia*: τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; (Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ?, 1 Cor. 10:16a).¹¹⁴ Corinthians were familiar with the cult of Sarapis, as noted above.¹¹⁵ The invitations to dine with Serapis

113 Taussig, *In the Beginning was the Meal*, 109.

114 Cf. Ephesians 5:18, where praise to Christ is noted as a contrasting activity to drunkenness.

115 Paus., 2.4.6.; Apul., *Met.* 11.9. Although Sarapis was Egyptian in origin, the deity gained immense popularity in the first century AD. Pausanias indicated that two precincts of the Acrocorinth were dedicated to Sarapis. *Metamorphoses* also associates the cult with Cenchrea. The cult remained present in Corinth, with statuary evidence of Sarapis dated to the second century AD. Donald W. Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 101–6.

can be compared to Pauline descriptions of the Lord's Supper.¹¹⁶ The cult of Serapis illustrates that the practices of the *ecclesia* in regard to commensal dining were understood as a real invocation of the presence of the Lord at the meal.¹¹⁷

Ritual in and of itself has group-forming capacity. Collective ritual and religious ritual have even more so. The combination of a collective religious ritual performed in the context of a festive meal is significant in terms of how the Eucharist was utilized for the sake of shaping the group identity of the *ecclesia*. Deep relationships were present within the *ecclesia*; in fact, these connections were described via kinship language to indicate just how close the believers in the community were to one another relationally. They gathered in common confession and strengthened each other's understanding of their faith via discussion and teaching around the table. The solidarity of the *ecclesia* was emphasized via the gathering—or at least should have been, even if the Corinthians were amiss in this regard. The seating structure could have been a tool for conveying this, even though due to the Corinthian waywardness, the opposite was occurring. The Lord's Supper was a means of clearly communicating who was an insider, a member of the *ecclesia*. The meal invoked the presence of deity by remembering the sacrifice of Jesus. The act of joining the meal was a public affiliation with the *ecclesia*, a statement to outsiders of one's spiritual identifications and one's social identity. In all the ways that a meal might bring social definition, the Lord's Supper brought ingroup boundary demarcation to the *ecclesia* in Corinth. If there was a context in which group identity might be reinforced by derogation of a deviant individual, the Eucharist was the most logical context for such a clear statement to be made.

4 Conclusion

Rituals are critical to the formation of ingroup identity. The Eucharistic ritual found in the Corinthian *ecclesia* and discussed elsewhere by Paul in his correspondence was an essential component in the establishment of social identity for the community. The ritual appealed to group-forming templates in the broader cultural milieu which shaped how outsiders may have conceived

116 Blue, "The House Church at Corinth and the Lord's Supper," 223; Kim, "Papyrus Invitation," 396; Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 77. There are many examples in antiquity of dining within temple precincts, but the Sarapis cult also dined in the homes of individuals belonging to the cult.

117 Lampe, "Das korinthische Herrenmahl im Schnittpunkt hellenistisch-römischer Mahlpraxis und paulinischer Theologia Crucis (1 Kor 11,17–34)," 199, fn 49.

of the *ecclesia* as a recognizable ingroup. To the degree that pagan converts came from such involvements, their concept of the *ecclesia* was also thusly formed. For insiders, the rituals were important for shaping the boundaries of the group, deepening relational bonds and formulating ideological commitments, each of which augmented the sense of identification with the group. When Paul informed the Corinthians that they need to gather together so that the immoral man might be put out of their midst, the apostle expressed strong support for a bounded conceptualization of the *ecclesia*. The chasm between ingroup and outgroup was wide in Paul's mind, even if the permeability of the ingroup was the ultimate goal of his ministry. Paul's description of ritual in 1 Corinthians affirmed his bounded conceptualization and furthered his goal of witness to outsiders.

Reputation as Criteria for Expulsion

1 The Argument, in Short

Paul's urgency and severity toward the immoral man were caused by the negative effect on witness toward outsiders. Due to widely affirmed Roman beliefs about incest, toleration of the practice by Christ-followers in Corinth markedly diminished the reputation of the *ecclesia* in ways that other morally corrupt behaviors would not have. Acknowledging the grave depravity of incest as the sole motive for urgency and severity falls short of a full explanation, since other serious issues in the Corinthian context resulted in non-expulsive consequences. Incest was certainly considered debauched and condemnable. However, the direct causal link between Paul's response and the situation is located in the aggregate effect of both the general agreement on the debauched nature of incest and also the reasons for which it was considered to be so by Roman pagans.

Of foremost importance in considering the social ramifications of the incestuous situation is an understanding of the paradigm through which Paul viewed the *ecclesia*. Paul believed the *ecclesia* was a bounded entity, and he deployed specific criteria to determine who was in and who was out of this group. Paul's use of particularized vocabulary, employment of rhetorical strategies and adherence to specific cultural orientations provide contextualized expressions of identity formation in Corinth. The apostle implicitly engaged in social categorization via the presence of subordinate groupings, the language of group permeability, vernacular references to outsiders, expectation of conformance to norms and social comparisons. This framework of group boundedness from which Paul was operating meant that endorsement of the immoral man by the *ecclesia* positioned someone behaving as an outsider squarely as an insider.

Liminality regarding group membership status eventuated from the inclusion of Gentiles in the *ecclesia*, a move which caused the ingroup definition found within Jewish sects to be ineffective for the newly forming community of faith. Paul looked to ethical norms as a means of defining and determining group membership. Sexual morals were of particular concern for Paul, in part because this had traditionally been a means of cultic purity and differentiation for Jews and in part because this was a way in which the *ecclesia* might stand out from the immorality in the surrounding cultural milieu. When the

congregation endorsed the incestuous man, the distinction of the *ecclesia* as a morally pure people was blurred. The situation was more than an individual violation of purity regulations. Paul's urgency and severity related to the significant threat for the reputational witness of the *ecclesia* posed by the immoral man. Unbelievers were hindered in seeing a member of the *ecclesia* as a *κλητός ἅγιος* (called-out holy one [own translation], 1 Cor. 1:1).

Paul points out the Gentile perception of incest poignantly in his introduction to the situation (1 Cor. 5:1). While the Romans condoned all manner of sexual practices which would otherwise be considered inappropriate by Jews, incest was not among those approved practices. This book has cataloged and analyzed Roman references to incest with the intent of demonstrating the basis for Roman rejection of the practice. Of particular significance is the Roman habit of viewing incest avoidance as a prototypical ingroup characteristic of Roman civic identity and viewing incest acceptance as a barbaric outgroup activity. To the Roman, the approval of incest by the Corinthian *ecclesia* would have appeared strangely anomalous, immoral and shameless. This was, of course, the opposite effect intended by Paul.

This situation inevitably presents the pressing question of why the immoral man and the *ecclesia* would have engaged in behavior that was condemned by the general Roman populace, not to mention the Jewish law. Several explanations have traditionally been offered for the motivation of the immoral man, including his ignorance, romantic attraction, greed and social pressure to wed due to Augustan marriage laws. These explanations prove to be unlikely in light of the prevailing honor-shame orientation of the cultural context. Several explanations have also been offered for the endorsement of the incest by the congregation, including ignorance, spiritual weakness and discomfort with breaching the protocols of a client-patron relationship. These explanations are also not probable.

This study has offered a new proposal for the motive of both the immoral man and the *ecclesia*, predicated on the significance of the honor-shame framework within which the Corinthian *ecclesia* was embedded. When the values of the dominant Roman culture were applied in the determination of claims to honor, the *ecclesia*, as a minority group within the culture, would not have found success in the agonistic pursuit of honor. The New Testament exhibits a pattern of adjudication for claims to honor: standard Roman norms for evaluating honor are replaced with alternate standards which match ingroup values while outsiders are denigrated as idolatrous and immoral. In order to justify the derision which inevitably followed as a result of abandoning standard social norms, believers embraced the misunderstanding on the part of unbelievers as a badge of honor in and of itself. Thus, it has been proposed that

the Corinthian Christ-followers knowingly embraced incest as a way of differentiating themselves from outsiders and that doing so became a source of honor for the *ecclesia*. The *ecclesia* felt justified in setting aside Roman norms in order to be distinctly different, believing that they were following the impetus of Paul's teaching to pursue social distinction.

Because the misstep of the *ecclesia* threatened the witness of the congregation by degrading their reputation and blurring group boundaries, derogation was the best strategy available to Paul for returning identity clarity to the *ecclesia*. Thus, clear and public derogation of the immoral man resolved the tensions on two scores: holiness was returned to the *ecclesia* and witness was restored to outsiders. Derogation possessed a punitive quality, though with a constructive intention. Paul enforced the expulsive consequence in the context of the ritual meal, for it is through the sympotic format of the Lord's Supper that identity was also shaped for the *ecclesia*. The Eucharistic references in 1 Corinthians 5:1–13, including the Passover lamb and leavened bread, as well as prohibitions on eating with the immoral man, demonstrate how Paul intended to protect and define ingroup boundaries for the *ecclesia* by how he responded to the immoral man.

The conclusion of this study is that concern for the reputation of the *ecclesia* was a significant factor influencing Paul's response to the situation. Paul was urgent and severe because he believed that incest endorsement by Christ-followers was confusing to unbelievers. The clear lines which should have demarcated the members of the *ecclesia* as morally distinct were eradicated by such a glaring repudiation of gentile beliefs and Jewish mores. The acceptance of the incestuous man by the Corinthian Christ-followers allowed a man who did not meet the criteria for membership to remain in the group. This blurred the boundaries of demarcation for inclusion as a member of the *ecclesia*, which in turn diminished the ability of the *ecclesia* to offer witness to outsiders.

2 Benefits of This Study

This study is primarily an exegetical exploration of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13, emphasizing the tools of social scientific approaches to explain the situation emicly. Nevertheless, the intended benefit of this study extends beyond the exegetical analysis itself. It is helpful to take stock of what has been affected by this analysis of 1 Corinthians 5:1–13 and what further considerations might be undertaken in the future. Generally speaking, I have categorized the benefits into two superordinate categories: factual and methodological advances.

In the former category, the Roman views of incest, the Eucharistic imagery of 1 Corinthians 5:6–8, the lexical arguments related to motive for incest and the ways in which Paul communicated a bounded ecclesiology are noted. In the latter category, the synergistic use of social scientific and historical-grammatical critical methods, the more specific use of subsets of social psychology and the collaborative combination of anthropological and psychological information are noted.

2.1 *Roman Views of Incest*

Paul's reference to gentile intolerance for incest has been assessed *ad hoc* in most of the scholarly literature. In the vast majority of commentaries, scholars have been content to offer representative examples of Roman disdain for incest. While this is helpful in establishing the fact that Paul made an accurate statement regarding gentile perceptions of incest, it has left something to be desired in terms of understanding why Paul made such a statement. It has been largely assumed that Paul was simply shaming the Corinthians by comparing them to an undesirable outgroup, the pagans, showing that their morality supersedes that of the congregation. Much more can be drawn from Paul's assertion. By placing as many Roman incest references as possible side by side, conclusions have been drawn related to the rationale for the Roman incest taboo. By understanding the reasons which informed the incest taboo, it is possible to realize why Paul was so urgent and severe. Sorting through numerous references to incest in antiquity is far from a pleasant scholarly inquiry, of course. Yet, it has proven necessary to see that Paul's statement that Gentiles do not tolerate incest is laden with meaning and essential to an interpretation of this passage.

2.2 *Eucharistic Imagery in 1 Corinthians 5:6–8*

An argument has also been made for why the Passover and leaven imagery of 1 Corinthians 5:6–8 should be read as a Eucharistic reference. This was an important topic to explore related to ritual, dining, expulsion and ingroup boundary formation. Scholarly opinion on whether these verses are Eucharistic or merely invoking Hebrew images has been divided and somewhat lightly discussed. So, it is my hope that this will also provide helpful material on that topic, as it relates to exegetical discussions outside the scope of this particular study. By making a firmer connection between expulsion and the Eucharist, much can be learned about how the consequences might be implemented for maximum benefit both to defining the community boundaries and shepherding the errant individual back into a righteous path. Arguably, the symbolism of the Lord's Supper may mean its commemoration is actually the best time

and place for expulsive remedies. But, to be sure, the context and means of putting someone out of the church should contribute meaningfully to both boundary definition and reform of the individual.

2.3 *Ethically Justified Incest*

It has been noted that the notion that the Corinthians endorsed incest in the name of the Lord has been dismissed out of hand by most, based on the seeming preposterous nature of the reading. Detailed attention has been given to the syntactical evidence that the prepositional phrase ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ (1 Cor. 5:4) modifies the participle κατεργασάμενον (1 Cor. 5:3). Since many scholars have overlooked this as a legitimate interpretive option, detailed grammatical consideration of this is missing in the history of scholarship. A thorough look at lexical patterns in 1 Corinthians demonstrates that Paul's assertion that the Corinthians believed the incest to be divinely sanctioned is both grammatically and culturally probable. Such a *prima facie* conclusion may be untenable to some readers, but at least this study provides detailed grammatical analysis for further discussions of the patterns of prepositional modifications of participles, not to mention the cultural implications of honor and shame for incest endorsement.

2.4 *Bounded Conception of Ecclesia*

An additional contribution of this book is found in the presentation of Paul's bounded conceptualization for the *ecclesia*. A fuller discussion of the ecclesiological implications of Paul's bounded approach is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, the elucidation of his implicit assumptions will have value in parallel scholarly conversations regarding an optimal ecclesiology in contemporary contexts. It can be readily seen that the popularity of a bounded ecclesiological conceptualization is waning in many contexts. This is not to say that direct replication of a Pauline approach demonstrates maximum validity in modern contexts, for this would endorse an overly simplistic hermeneutic. Nonetheless, any time that an exegete moves from the biblical world to his or her own context, the similarities and differences must be accounted for carefully. This study has made the case that Paul saw clear boundary markers by which a member of the *ecclesia* could identify as an ingroup affiliate. The natural corollary for this group boundedness was the existence of strong differentiation between believer and unbeliever. Ecclesiological approaches which diminish difference in order to welcome outsiders inside the church operate quite differently than the Pauline framework presented in 1 Corinthians. It is my hope that the analysis found here will give further exegetical material for the ongoing evaluation of the merits and concerns of a bounded ecclesiology

in our own times. It is my further hope that this material will augment, in some small way, the broader discussion of how to develop a robust hermeneutic which enables helpful application of situations quite foreign to our own.

2.5 *Social Scientific and Historical-Grammatical Criticism*

Beyond the more detailed examination of these four areas, this study has attempted to model some methodological advances as well. It has not necessarily pioneered a new methodology in biblical interpretation; however, it has demonstrated the synergistic usage of historical-grammatical and social scientific criticisms. I have attempted to lay out with care a case for prioritism in regard to the textual data itself. Social analysis should never supplant the information provided by the text itself. That said, I have also demonstrated that social data is far from being merely ancillary background material in the task of exegesis. Social scientific criticism can be utilized to accomplish the express purpose of historical-grammatical criticism, that is to understand the meaning of the words as they were conveyed by real people in real time. Identifying the original meaning of the biblical text is more than a nuanced lexical study. Making such an assertion does not diminish an affirmation of verbal plenary inspiration. In my estimation, it confirms it. The words of Scripture are written within a social context. Understanding the social milieu is essential to correctly interpreting the words in the text. It has been my goal to model a robust social analysis in service of traditional historical-grammatical methodologies.

2.6 *Advancing Social Identity Analysis*

This study has also highlighted the salience of social identity for understanding the Corinthian context and, therefore, for interpreting 1 Corinthians. Acknowledgment of the value of social identity approaches has proliferated in recent years within many publications. This study follows in the path of others which have considered how the social identity of the Corinthian Christ-followers affected their choices and perceptions. Methodologically speaking, specific theories and constructs within the social identity approach have been given more detailed attention. Chapter three utilized the social psychological concepts of self enhancement and uncertainty reduction as motives for self-categorization to explain the liminality in Corinth regarding ingroup demarcation. The matter of witness for the *ecclesia* was considered on the basis of the social psychological phenomenon of permeability. Chapter four considered the matter of outgroup vilification. Rather than examining the outlook of the *ecclesia* in regard to their own ingroup boundaries, the ingroup orientation of pagan Romans was considered as a salient factor in the development of the reputation of the *ecclesia*. Chapter five demonstrated

how subjective group dynamics (black sheep effect) elucidate the more severe treatment of an insider by Paul in contrast to his openness toward outgroup members, which is explained in terms of principles of group permeability. The discussion of subjective group dynamics was interwoven with research on honor/shame/shamelessness in near eastern Mediterranean cultures, as there is a strong point of correspondence between 'the court of public opinion' and the social psychological principle of group defining norms. Also, of use in this chapter is the matter of a negative exemplar as a strategy for preventing non-normative behavior. Chapter six showed how collective ritual performance cultivated ingroup identity. The effect of gathering on group solidarity and the validation of belief were considered, as well as how belief shapes an individual's sense of belonging.

While the social psychological constructs utilized have intentionally remained in the background of this analysis, it is my hope that the heuristic application of these principles has further nuanced the ways in which the social identity approach might benefit the exegetical enterprise. The *T&T Clark Social Identity Commentary on the New Testament* has usefully enjoined conversation in this regard. There are numerous areas in the exploration of 1 Corinthians where further in-depth social identity analysis would build upon the existing exegetical evaluations currently in print. Two examples are provided here, both expressions of Paul regarding witness toward outsiders in the two chapters subsequent to 1 Corinthians 5:1–13.

In 1 Corinthians 6:1–11, Paul suggests a strong contrast between the *ecclesia* and the world. The ways in which believers behave in front of unbelievers is an express concern for Paul and potential motive for discouraging believers from engaging in lawsuits against one another. Paul appeals here as well to shame as problematic and encourages counter-cultural behavior by allowing oneself to be wronged. Applying the methodology used in this book for the situation in 1 Corinthians 6:1–11 would yield helpful insights into how perceptions of unbelievers about the behavior of Christ-followers in the public sphere should influence the ethics and ethos of believers. Detailed historical research related to Roman litigation could be combined with cultural analysis of honor pursuits and shaming techniques in court, with consideration for how ingroup identity is formed in these interactions. The ways in which witness of the *ecclesia* is affected might be better understood and applied.

Another area of potential exploration involves the complexity of multi-valent identities for believers. In 1 Corinthians 7:10–16, Paul suggests that a believer married to an unbelieving spouse must consider the relevancy of both a Roman civic identity and the in-Christ identity. A loyal spouse has some merit in offering an effective witness to outsiders, as Romans were highly suspicious of groups which drew spouses away in pursuit of divine callings. Paul appears

to be shaping the identity of the *ecclesia* by virtue of his exhortations for life in the *oikos*. This would parallel a similar pattern exhibited in Ephesians 5:22–33, where household codes inform theological understandings and witness. This overlapping of Roman civic identity and in-Christ identity within the household presents a complex situation for believers where identity saliences would have needed to be prioritized in order to perpetuate effective witness to unbelievers. Such a study could bring together a rich analysis of kinship constructs in first-century Roman culture and the Pauline concern for ethical behavior in the marital relationship as a means of witness for the *ecclesia*. Such an exploration would assist believers who find themselves in situations where two or more relevant ingroup identities come to bear simultaneously.

These are but a couple of examples of how a social identity and sociological analysis might be productively engaged for effective exegetical exploration. The correspondence with the Corinthians is rife with opportunity for further evaluation in this regard, and it is my hope that someone will undertake such analysis.

2.7 *Synergism between Anthropological and Psychological Approaches*

This study has also sought to bring together diverse aspects of social scientific criticism into synergistic cohesion. For example, I have deployed existing models regarding honor, shame and shamelessness in light of the effect of these constructs on identity in the Corinthian environment. When such social scientific models are removed from their silos and used in conjunction with each another, more substantive conclusions can be derived. Here it has been argued that the Corinthians took the Pauline directive to embrace the shame of the gospel as license to behave with shamelessness instead. Such a synthetic usage of social identity and anthropological models has resulted in a new proposal to explain the vexing matter of why the Corinthian *ecclesia* would practice and endorse incestuous relationships. This synthesis of varying social scientific approaches was also at work in the analysis of dining ritual as an identity-forming reality in Corinth. Aspects of identity formation were linked to specific features of the sympotic format found in the Lord's Supper. This analysis resulted in a nuanced consideration of how the exclusion of the immoral man from the Eucharistic meal contributed to insider and outsider understanding of identity for the *ecclesia*.

A social identity approach is valuable in and of itself; however, it has much greater benefit when combined with sociological analysis. For example, the lens of social identity assists immensely in evaluating cultural emphases found in a collectivistic context. This study has modelled the interplay between honor pursuits and ingroup identity. Other such integrative pursuits could be undertaken with similar model. As noted in the previous section, sociological

research regarding the Roman court system or household could be integrated with social identity research related to ingroup distinction and identity salience.

3 Conclusion

In many ways, prior exegesis of this passage has left interpreters dismayed on the question of how to determine when expulsive consequences should be mediated, apart from an incestuous scenario. It has been generally agreed upon that the sinner must be unrepentant and the sin must be serious. The text certainly upholds these principles. It has frequently been assumed that immorality of any sort might potentially qualify as needing expulsive consequence, although this has increasingly become far from a foregone conclusion. Even so, these criteria leave open a wide swath of potential scenarios where pastors and elders must decide whether or not to replicate Paul's approach.

This book has explicated the criteria of reputation for the *ecclesia* as a decisive factor in the application of expulsive consequence. If indeed this was a primary rationale for Paul's urgency and severity, then reputation rises in prominence when the principles of this text are applied in non-incestuous scenarios. The exegete has a more concrete criterion than that of serious, unrepentant sin. In this sense, the general perception of outsiders toward the sin committed becomes quite salient to the decision of whether to exclude a sinning member. Since this outsider perception will vary from context to context, the matter of which sins require expulsive responses must be undertaken with careful discernment and clairvoyant understanding of the social values present in that particular context.

Expulsive consequence should be mediated when sin within the congregation is serious, unrepentant and damaging to the witness of the *ecclesia*. By prioritizing ingroup distinction as a criterion for whether to initiate expulsion of a church member, the church avoids vindictiveness and instead embraces a constructive goal, that is to position the church as distinct from outsiders while also remaining welcoming toward those who wish to join the church. Paul always intended the *ecclesia* to be a permeable ingroup, in the language of social identity. Thus, exclusion is not intended to make the *ecclesia* less accessible to outsiders. Quite the contrary, exclusion brings clear definition such that believer and unbeliever can be differentiated. Then, those who affiliate with the *ecclesia* do so with full recognition of the need to leave behind aspects of their former identity in order to conform to the moral expectations of the new community. In this way, the transforming capacity of the gospel is proclaimed through the lives of believers.

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Index

- adoption 165*n*, 167
adultery 7*n*, 92, 145, 167–168, 194
analytic kin circumlocution 92
Aphrodite
 cult of 106, 108–12, 259
 temple of 107–9
asceticism 40, 99, 114, 212*n*
Asclepius 88, 242
atonement 55, 246, 249–50, 253, 257–58

baptism 45, 67–69, 82–89, 117, 245, 264
barbarian 12, 18, 122*n*, 138, 140–42,
 149–50, 152, 157–59, 162, 175–78,
 269
birth 72–4, 186
black sheep effect 31–34, 41–42, 189*n*, 191,
 217, 231–32
boundary markers 35, 75, 106, 114, 237, 241,
 272

circumcision 97, 237
client-patron system 39, 71*n*, 210*n*, 269
commensality 234–5, 238, 242, 254
conversion 67, 97, 99*n*, 208, 229

derogation 31, 34, 37, 171, 179–234, 254, 266,
 270
deviance 32–4, 42, 179, 192
dining 234, 236, 240–42, 245, 248, 254–55,
 259–61, 263, 266, 271
discipline 86, 96
dishonor, extreme 194, 197–99
disunity 50–52, 54, 56, 247–48

ethical norms 79, 120, 268
ethics 21*n*, 112–13, 116, 120
 sexual ethics 12, 21, 40, 95, 232
 ethics and ethos 42–46, 66, 106
 ethics and norms 46, 79, 113*n*, 120, 268
ethnicity 65, 86, 93, 103–05
ethos 40, 42–46, 65–66, 219. *See also* ethics
 and ethos
Eucharist 53, 69–70, 77–79, 86, 271
exclusion 63, 76, 179, 205, 212, 239, 275–76
expulsion 6, 8–9, 41, 60, 62, 150, 178–79, 229,
 232–33, 259, 271, 276

gender 52, 86, 98–100, 105–06, 184, 248
group boundedness 63–67, 79, 81–82, 89,
 233–34, 268, 272
group identity 25, 33, 65, 70, 75–76, 78,
 189–90, 244, 251, 266
group members 26, 30, 32, 191, 217, 234, 243,
 246
group norms 30, 66, 74, 81, 179, 188–90, 231,
 234
group permeability 268, 274, 94

honor 47, 91, 94, 101–02, 180–98, 204–06,
 215–20, 229–30, 251–52, 269–70
honor-shame framework 91, 180, 184, 190,
 208, 217, 232, 269

identity 29, 35, 37–46, 65–66, 69, 83–84,
 86, 93, 97, 100, 103–06, 112–14, 215, 239,
 241–42, 253–54, 275–76
 civic 253, 269, 274–75
 corporate 43–44, 70, 115, 231, 246
 ethnic 65, 105, 113
 nested 31, 34
 shared 70, 83, 190
identity formation 46, 66, 121, 231, 235, 264,
 268, 275
idolatry 50–51, 53–54, 56, 72, 79, 118, 124,
 232, 251–53, 259–60
imitation 79, 81, 90, 115. *See also mimesis*
immorality 52–53, 56, 82, 86, 106–07,
 110–12, 135, 191, 207–08, 231–32, 252–53,
 255, 259–61. *See also* sexual ethics
incest taboo 1, 142, 161–64, 169–70, 173–74,
 176–78, 207–08, 211, 230, 271
incestum 125, 128, 156, 160
in-Christ identity 36, 39–40, 45, 68–69, 84,
 86, 105–06, 251, 253, 274–75
ingroup 32–33, 37, 62–63, 71–72, 81, 113, 183,
 229, 233–34, 241, 245, 266–67
 bias 29, 33
 distinctiveness 34–35, 106, 120, 217, 229,
 233, 276
 favoritism 30–34, 37
 members 31–36, 79, 86, 116, 187, 189, 191,
 195, 232, 234, 244, 246
 norms 24, 217–232

- initiation 89, 245, 264
 insiders 35, 58, 62, 66, 75, 82, 89, 114, 116,
 244, 262, 266–68, 274
 invective 127–28, 130–31, 137, 139, 141, 153,
 157–58, 170, 172

jus gentium 142, 178

 kinship 17, 82, 89–94, 96, 125, 154, 167,
 194–96, 208, 245–46, 266

 lawsuits 51*n*, 56, 69, 75, 194, 201, 248, 253,
 274
 leaven 9*n*, 10, 61, 63, 196*n*, 230, 252, 258
 libertinism 40, 212–13
 litigation 91, 135, 163, 168*n*, 210
 liturgy 250, 254
 Lord's Supper 52–53, 97, 102, 193, 237, 246,
 248–57, 260–66, 270–71

 marriage 71, 92, 98–100, 125, 133–34, 144,
 148–49, 155–58, 162, 164–68, 172–76,
 194, 200–05, 208, 248
 meals, festive 237, 239, 241, 262, 266.
See also dining
 metaphor 82, 85, 89, 93, 195, 220, 252
 mission and ethics 37*n*, 116, 119–20
 models 21–23, 26, 49, 103, 215, 219, 273,
 275
 modesty 134, 152
 moral ethos 95, 106, 116
 mother 90, 132–33, 136–38, 140–42, 151, 154,
 157, 165–66, 169–71
 mystery cult 241, 264

nefas 138, 140, 145, 198, 206–07
 norm conformance 31, 33, 79–80, 116,
 191–92, 217, 233
 norms 32–33, 35, 46, 76–79, 81, 83, 113,
 117–18, 120, 187, 190, 192, 213, 215–17, 219,
 229–30, 232–33

 outgroup 27, 31–32, 35–40, 63–64, 71, 75–76,
 79, 89, 113, 115, 216, 253, 267, 271
 membership 32–34, 75, 85, 89, 115, 163,
 178, 189, 216, 233–234, 244, 274
 negativity 35, 79, 141, 150–51, 157, 159,
 176–77, 273
 vilification 141, 159, 176, 216–17

 outsiders 37, 40, 52–54, 58, 66, 74–76, 81–82,
 87–89, 93–94, 112–14, 116–19, 122–23,
 178–79, 195–96, 199, 229, 231, 233, 244,
 262, 266–70, 274, 276

 paraenesis 78, 113–16
 Passover 61, 246, 254–58, 260, 262
 patronage 47, 102, 194, 196, 206*n*, 210.
See also client-patron system
 patrons 102, 154, 182, 185, 194–96, 210, 253
 permeability 36, 70, 72, 267, 273
 πορνεία 57–58, 63–64, 177–78, 228, 252, 259
 prostitutes 52, 107–08, 111, 208, 212, 248,
 252–53
 prototype 35, 39
 prototypical figures 36, 79, 81, 191, 217, 232

 reputation 106–07, 110–12, 134, 136, 172, 174,
 178–79, 184, 188, 216, 218–20, 229–30,
 268–70, 276
 resurrection 52, 54–55, 67, 87, 119, 217, 233,
 248
 rites, initiatory 82, 84, 89, 94
 ritual 42, 46, 48–49, 79, 82–83, 87–89, 98,
 234, 242–44, 246–47, 249, 251, 253, 262,
 266–67
 Eucharistic 48, 234, 244, 246, 251, 253,
 262, 266
 meal 244, 260, 263, 270. *See also* meals,
 festive
 baptism 82–83, 86, 89. *See also* baptism
 ritual theory 48–49

 Sarapis 241, 264–65
scelus 136–37, 140, 145
 self-categorization theory 27, 30–31, 39, 190,
 246, 273
 shame 18–19, 42, 46–47, 178–81, 183–201,
 204, 206–07, 209, 215–16, 218–20,
 229–30, 232–33, 272, 274–75. *See also*
 honor-shame framework
 shamelessness 46–47, 178, 188–89, 194,
 197–99, 217, 275
 singleness 118, 205, 259
 social categorization 30, 43–44, 64, 66, 76,
 79, 94, 246–47, 268
 social comparisons 34–35, 43, 66, 76, 79,
 94, 268
 social distinction 95, 106, 120–21, 270

- social identity approach 2, 13, 20–21, 27, 31,
34, 40, 43, 65–66, 79, 93, 113, 252–53,
273–75
- social identity complexity theory 36–37,
214*n*
- social identity theory 26–31
- social norms 96, 173, 179, 186–90, 197, 201,
206, 209, 215–16, 219
- social psychology 19, 24–28, 41, 189, 271
- social scientific criticism 2*n*, 12–19, 23,
273–75
- social status 14, 36, 86, 98, 100–02, 106, 161,
183–84, 186, 192–94, 200, 209–11, 235,
240–41, 265
- social stratification 68, 98, 102, 240–41
- standards, ethical 24, 78, 115, 209
- status change 43, 70–74, 116
- stepmother 4, 8, 59, 92, 142–43, 149,
153–54, 156, 160–61, 194, 202, 213
- stepson 149, 153–54, 156, 158, 160–61, 202–3
- subjective group dynamics 21, 33, 37, 189,
232, 274
- superordinate identity 31, 67–70, 105
- symposium 235–42, 354, 262–66
- sympotic 53, 97, 234, 236–38, 262
- unbelievers 2, 35–37, 53, 63, 70–72, 76, 85,
91, 93, 116–20, 123–24, 214–19, 229–30,
248, 269–70, 274–76
- water rituals 83*n*, 88
- witness 2, 11–12, 36, 52–56, 64, 70, 79–81,
116–22, 195–97, 229–30, 253, 267, 268–70



When Paul heard that a Christ-follower in Corinth was in an incestuous relationship with his stepmother, the apostle insisted the man be removed immediately from the congregation. This dramatic response is surprising, as Paul responds to other serious situations with much less vehemence. Why did Paul react to the immoral man with such urgency and severity? Using socio-cultural tools, this study explains the importance of group identity and witness for Paul's ecclesiology. The argument lays a foundation for contemporary readers to appraise contexts where an expulsive response to sin might be appropriate.

DAVID E. BOSWORTH, Ph.D. (2022), Evangelische Theologische Faculteit Leuven, is Professor of New Testament Studies and Mission at Colorado Christian University in Lakewood, Colorado and a Research Associate in the Department of New Testament and Related Literature at the University of Pretoria. He also serves as U.S. Director for the Zodiares International New Testament Study Center in Athens, Greece.

ISBN: 978-90-04-69311-1



9 789004 693111

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION SERIES, 221

ISSN 0928-0731

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